

Amanda Scarpone
Poland
LD 468

Amanda Scarpone
Poland, Maine
March 4, 2025

To Members of the Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee. My name is Amanda Scarpone, I am a resident of Poland, Maine, and I am a public health professional who works in the non-profit and philanthropy field. I am also a Board member of the nonprofit organization Cultivating Community.

I am writing to you today in support of LD 468, An Act to Address Food Insecurity by Helping Maine Residents Access Locally Produced Food. As a public health professional, I know that equitable access to healthy, fresh food is a key part of Mainers having healthy and thriving lives. This bill would double the State Nutrition Incentive Fund and provide ongoing, sustainable, reliable funding for programs that benefit Mainers. This act ensures more accessible ways to connect Mainers with healthy, fresh, local food, and it ensures steady income for our own farmers here in Maine. Farmers markets are a key part of thriving communities, and provide not just access to food, but a sense of community and pride and belonging. It is a place where our diverse neighbors converge and build relationships and this strengthens our communities. Incentive programs such as that covered in LD 468 boost local farmers' success (last year farmers markets led to \$1.2 million in sales to Maine producers) and help our low-income families better use and stretch their budgets to provide fresh and healthy food to their families. This act also makes our communities more resilient and less dependent on the national food systems that are often unstable and also do not provide access to culturally important foods that our neighbors deserve. Maine is a state that prides itself on its fresh food, our farms, and our innovative restaurants. We should also pride ourselves on how we feed each other, and our communities. LD 468 helps us do just that.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective with the Committee. I urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 468.

Thank you,
Amanda Scarpone