

Kelsey Kobik  
Freedom, ME  
LD 468

Testimony of Kelsey Kobik of Freedom, ME before the Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Dear members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry.

My name is Kelsey Kobik, I am a resident of Freedom, and I am here today as a Farmer to express my support of LD 468 – An Act to Address Food Insecurity by Helping Maine Residents Access Locally Produced Food.

Since learning to farm as an employee over ten years ago, I have been trying to find a way to have my own farm. Working with plants and producing food for a living is all I want to do. Last year, I finally got to the point where I could bring a crop to market, selling my blackberries at the Waterville Farmers' Market. My very first sale was paid for with Maine Harvest Bucks. This milestone event in my life was made possible, and enhanced, by Maine nutrition incentives.

SNAP and Maine Harvest Bucks allow farmers like me to ask a fair price for our produce, knowing that people struggling to access fresh, healthy food at least have this program. I don't have to feel like I'm taking the money I need to run my business from someone who can't afford it, just to be able to eat ripe summer fruit. Our world is not perfect, but Maine Harvest Bucks is a program that brings us closer to equitable access to basic human needs.

I want to see Maine Harvest Bucks continue to grow at farmers' markets. I want more Mainers to learn they can stretch their budget to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables. I want every shopper to feel like they can afford to participate in and support their local food system. And I want the hundreds of market farmers and food producers like me to feel like we can run stable, sustainable businesses. LD 468 contributes to all of this in a major way with increased, continuous funding that farmers can depend on. Please lend your support to this bill.

Thank you.