

Testimony of Rachel Chapman of Freedom before the 132st 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 Rachel Chapman, I am a resident of Freedom, and I am here today as a Farmer, Business Owner, and Market Organizer to express my support of LD 468 – An Act to Address Food Insecurity by Helping Maine Residents Access Locally Produced Food.

My farm, Seven Moon Farm, is a certified organic vegetable farm. We sell the majority of our produce within 20 miles of our farm. Over half of our annual gross income comes from sales at the Downtown Waterville Farmer's Market, where we have been members since 2022. I currently serve as Secretary on the Steering Committee of this farmer's market. In 2024, of the \$23,000 in gross sales Seven Moon Farm made at the Downtown Waterville Farmer's Market, \$2,840 of those dollars were SNAP or Maine Harvest Bucks sales. That is over 12% of our sales at this market, and 7% of our total annual sales, that depend on fully funded SNAP and Maine Harvest Bucks Programs.

Economic impact to my business aside, I firmly believe that SNAP benefits are a necessity for many of our market customer's households. The Downtown Waterville Farmer's Market has high SNAP redemption rates, and the MHB program allows these low-income individuals to purchase more fresh, healthy fruit and vegetables for their household. Serving our SNAP and MHP customers is an accomplishment of the Downtown Waterville Farmer's Market community mission of helping to fight food insecurity & feed all members of the community.

LD 468 would double the State Nutrition Incentive Fund to \$1.2million per year, and make the funding ongoing. This continuous funding would help the Downtown Waterville Farmer's Market cover the cost of bonus bucks redemption for folks to purchase fruits and vegetables with, in addition to helping us to promote the program to get more community members using SNAP to our market, and cover the costs of our info booth staff and EBT equipment.

Thank you for your time,

Rachel Chapman
Seven Moon Farm, owner/ operator
Freedom, Maine

Rachel Chapman
Freedom
LD 468

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Rachel Chapman

Seven Moon Farm, owner/ operator

Freedom, Maine