

Amber Lambke
Skowhegan
LD 468

Testimony of Amber Lambke of Skowhegan 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 Amber Lambke, I am a resident of Skowhegan, ME, and I am writing to you as a vendor of baked goods, and the volunteer Treasurer of the 25-year-old Skowhegan Farmers Market. I am writing to express my support of LD 468 – An Act to Address Food Insecurity by Helping Maine Residents Access Locally Produced Food.

Since the Skowhegan Farmers Market made the commitment to buy its first EBT processing machine in 2005, it has been committed to serving the 51% of Skowhegan residents that qualify for federal nutrition assistance. This market was an early pioneer to test, and establish that nutrition incentives and coupons that extend the value of snap transactions at a farmers market improve health, increase local food purchases among SNAP users, and help to keep critical dollars in our local communities supporting the farmers that live and work here.

The Market works closely with the Maine Federation of Farmer's Markets to implement nutrition incentive programs at the Skowhegan Market. In 2024, the market distributed 240 senior farm shares worth \$50 each toward fruit and vegetable purchases to help eligible seniors. SNAP expenditures when paired with nutrition incentive coupons comprise 30% of market sales at the Skowhegan Farmers Market, fighting food insecurity and feeding all members of the community. These critical programs that reach vulnerable citizens improve health, change lives, and create social connections at Farmer's Market's that have led to new employment and volunteer opportunities and well-being in a win-win-win program for our community.

I urge you to support this bill which would double the State Nutrition Incentive Fund to \$1.2 million per year, AND make the funding ongoing.