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President of the Senate

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

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Testimony in Support of LD 468
An Act to Address Food Insecurity by Helping Maine Residents Access Locally Produced Food
Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

March 6, 2025

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker and esteemed members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee, my name is Mattie Daughtry, and I proudly serve as President of the Maine State Senate, where I am honored to represent Senate District 23, which includes Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, Pownal, Chebeague Island and part of Yarmouth. I stand before you today to speak in strong support of LD 468, “An Act to Address Food Insecurity by Helping Maine Residents Access Locally Produced Food.”

This bill is not only a vital step in addressing the pressing issue of food insecurity in our state, but it also represents an opportunity to strengthen our local economy and support our hard working farmers.

As many of you know, my partner Phil and I are regulars at the Brunswick Farmers Market, where we proudly represent our small business. Being vendors at the market has given us firsthand experience of the incredible value that farmers markets provide our community. They are not just venues for commerce; they are equalizing spaces where individuals from all walks of life come together to shop, to catch up and share in all that our local farms have to offer. At these markets, relationships are built, community is fostered, and access to fresh, locally produced food is made possible.

With the ongoing funding of \$12,000,000 per fiscal year proposed in this bill, we can significantly enhance the ability of low-income Mainers to purchase food directly from our local farmers. This initiative is not just about ending hunger; it is about empowering our neighbors and investing in our local economy. By matching contributions from both private and public sources, this bill ensures that more money will flow directly into the hands of our farmers, thereby supporting their livelihoods and reinforcing the local food system.

Food insecurity is a persistent issue in Maine, and the need for secure, ongoing investments in nutrition programs cannot be overstated, especially in this broader federal climate. LD 468 will infuse the Fund with much-needed dollars, allowing us to sustain and expand efforts to combat hunger in our communities. This funding represents a commitment not only to those who struggle to put food on the table but also to the farmers who work tirelessly to provide healthy, nutritious options for all of us.

I urge you to support LD 468. Together, we can make a meaningful impact on the lives of low-income Mainers, strengthen our local food systems and foster a more equitable and sustainable future for our state. Thank you for your time and consideration and I’m happy to take any questions you might have.