

Deborah Chadbourne  
Farmington Farmers' Market  
LD 468

Testimony of Deborah Chadbourne of Freeman Township, Maine, before the 132nd 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 Deborah Chadbourne, I am a resident of Freeman Township, Maine, and I am here today as a farmer and as market manager of Farmington Farmers' Market to express my support of LD 468 – An Act to Address Food Insecurity by Helping Maine Residents Access Locally Produced Food.

The Maine Harvest Bucks (MHB) program is an incredibly valuable resource that benefits our farmers, those SNAP recipients who use their benefits to buy local food at the farmers' markets, and our community as a whole. It brings new customers to market and encourages them to keep coming back, developing relationships with the people who grow their food. It increases their spending power, specifically their ability to buy healthy, locally grown food, the purchase of which supports our small local farms and keeps those funds circulating within the community.

In 2024, our customers spent \$ 5756.59 in SNAP benefits and \$2843 in Maine Harvest Bucks at our small rural market, and we welcomed 60 new SNAP customers. From 2018 through 2024, our market has seen over \$30,000 in SNAP purchases and over \$18,000 in purchases using Maine Harvest Bucks, with 228 new SNAP customers. There are plenty more members of our community who could benefit from this program if it has the necessary funding to continue and if we have more opportunity to get the word out.

This program funds the MHB vouchers themselves as well as the work of the Maine Federation of Farmers' Markets. The Federation serves as our fiscal sponsor, helps to promote the program and attract more customers, and provides the infrastructure needed for its continued operation and success. Continuous funding at the \$1.2 million per year level will allow MFFM to focus on strengthening this and many other valuable programs and resources they provide to farmers and communities throughout the state of Maine, freeing up resources they would otherwise have to spend on fundraising efforts.

I encourage you to vote in favor of LD 468.

Thank you for your time,  
Deborah Chadbourne, Market Manager  
Farmington Farmers' Market