

Kristina Kalolo
Portland
LD 468

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

My name is Kristina Kalolo, I am a resident of Portland, Maine and I am here as a community member to express my support of LD 468 - An Act to Address Food Insecurity by Helping Maine Residents Access Locally Produced Food.

In my past role as Markets Manager for Liberation Farms, I saw firsthand how powerful nutrition incentives can be. Maine Harvest Bucks strengthens Maine's local economy, builds greater food security, and contributes to healthier and more connected communities. The ability to provide bonus incentives increased overall sales and brought in new shoppers to what was an emerging farm business. It allowed neighbors who were struggling with inadequate SNAP dollars to bring back twice as much food to their families. Importantly, this was not just any food - it was organic, local, and picked that day - at the peak of its freshness and nutritional value. There were new relationships built and people learning who was growing their food for the first time.

In this time of great uncertainty around federal funding, it is more critical than ever that Maine Harvest Bucks receive continuous funding at the \$1.2 million level per year. It is essential to ensure these resources are offered without interruption to our food insecure neighbors and our local producers.

Help create a future where every person in our state is food secure and our farmers are thriving. Please vote in support of LD468 and for continuous funding at \$1.2 million per year for the well-being of all Mainers and our local economy.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this testimony.

Sincerely,

Kristina Kalolo