

3/11/25

To: Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

From: Isabelle Rogers

Re: Testimony in Support of *LD 124 “An Act to Protect the Right to Food”*

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker and the esteemed members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee: My name is Isabelle Rogers, I am a resident of Starks and a community organizer. I am speaking in support of ***LD 124: An Act to Protect the Right to Food.***

I’ve grown up and have lived in rural Maine my entire life. Like many rural Mainers, I have always grown and maintained personal and neighborhood gardens, and have worked various jobs on seasonal Maine agricultural farms. Even when I lived in low-income housing without any access to workable garden space, it was through local community garden programs that made it possible for myself and others to have a community garden to grow and be connected to local food. By supporting LD 124, programs like these can be more widely accessible to people without workable soil-space in all counties (including unclassified plantations), and cultivate a stronger focus on establishing permaculture, edible landscaping, food forests and community gardens in underutilized public spaces throughout Maine.

Supporting LD 124 would enhance Maine’s rural economic development and allow Mainers to continue maintaining vegetable gardens on permissible private and public property in the state without interference, and would protect the right to food within Maine’s state constitution. Everyone has the right to be connected to their local food sources, and protecting local food on a constitutional level is vital to maintaining our communities’ fundamental health and wellbeing.

I believe Maine’s soil-health, agriculture and local food system are essential to vibrantly shaping the future of our communities and economy for all generations, while preserving Maine’s heritage and connection to the land we call home.

I urge you to vote in favour of LD 124 to protect the right to food in Maine.

Thank you,

Isabelle Rogers
