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LD 1198

I am writing today in support of LD 1198 a resolve directing the DACF to assess its current meat and poultry inspection programs. I wish it were a directive instructing them to overhaul their programs completely to eliminate all the unnecessary red tape that is crippling the small-scale meat processors in this state.

In the past inspectors and the DACF worked with producers and small-scale processors to increase availability of slaughtering dates. When Henrietta Boufet and her crew were in power they worked with folks to get more processors involved. They knew driving animals long distances to slaughter is not humane. They cared about animal welfare and the welfare of farmers and processors here in Maine.

In the past few years there has been nothing but conflict coming from DACF's Meat and Poultry Inspection Program. Even processors who have been licensed with DACF are switching to USDA inspections because there is less hassle.

We need MORE processors in this state. We need an easily understood program without all the hoops to jump through. It is difficult to even comprehend all the rules and regulations that are in place currently. Consequently, inspectors are free to punish at will. Instead of working with farmers and small-scale processors to address shortfalls or fix small issues, the state has chosen to be adversarial and punish at any and all opportunities.

Please vote for this resolve. It is a VERY small first step toward making the DACF responsive and responsible.