

McDOUGAL • ORCHARDS



*Apples and so much more.....*

201 Hanson Ridge Road  
Springvale, ME 04083

April 9, 2025

We write in support of the Land for Maine's Future (LMF) conservation program and LD 362. As pointed out in our previous testimony, submitted in support of 2021's LD 983, LMF funding is very important to many farmers. Farm fields continue to rapidly disappear under houses, which are far more lucrative to grow than apples. You have heard this before, but it bears repeating. If farms fail and the land is not protected, we lose local food production, open fields, and many forested acres. LD 362 provides some funding to make it possible for farming to continue in areas where it may not be as economically viable as it once was (i.e., Maine.) LMF funding helps keep small family farms in business, keeps vistas open for tourists and allows our neighbors continued access to fresh, local food and fiber. It is not a "give-away," as some would argue. The bill states that public funds spent for working farmland require matching funds or tangible assets, many times being the donation of development rights.

This bill is important to all of us who farm in Maine. As we have seen here in York County, when farms go away, so does the infrastructure that supports them. There is no longer a wholesale packing house or a long-term apple storage facility in York County. Many orchards planted in the 1930's and in peak production in the 1970's and 80's, are either abandoned or now cater to the u-pick crowd, supporting less than a quarter of the acreage. To those who may argue this bill is not needed, look at southern Maine. The local John Deere dealership here sells more lawn tractors than farm equipment. We consequently have trouble sourcing parts and repairs locally.

McDougal Orchards is, thankfully, completing a successful transition to the next generation. Our two children see a viable future here thanks, in part, to the assurance that pieces of our land cannot be sold to finance short-term losses. Please support LD 362. Your children and grandchildren, and ours, will reap the benefits.

Ellen, Jack, Matt, & Polly McAdam, Owners