

Molly DellaRoman
Brooklin
LD 1140

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Brooklin, Maine
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Dear Members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on the behalf of LD 1140. My name is Molly DellaRoman and I live in Brooklin, ME. I am writing today to express full support for this bill.

My partner Tim Skillin and I own and operate 5 Star Nursery and Orchard. We are a small, diversified farm with a MOFGA- certified organic, heirloom orchard and a native plant nursery. The beginning of this growing season seems very different than most with all the turmoil currently happening in the federal government. Many farmers are worried and disheartened with the apparent shift to leave us to fend with climate change on our own, along with the abrupt arrival of tariffs with no funds being provided for building up local and regional farming supply chains. We have recently been notified that our USDA funding for solar panels may finally be unfrozen, but farms in Maine with obligated contracts have yet to see the funds moving, and for many, the damage may already be done for this season. Solar panels and the economic burden they would help relieve from rising energy costs, in particular if threatened tariffs are carried out, would be key in helping keep our costs manageable for many years to come. This is just one example of why it is so important for Maine to finally be capitalizing the Maine Agriculture, Food and Forest Products Investment Fund.

Maine can play an incredibly important role in growing and feeding New England. Having farmed for just as many years in MA as ME, I can attest that the support for the agriculture industry here in Maine is top-notch. Together with publically funded farmland protection, investments in climate smart agricultural practices, and funding made available for infrastructure and processing, Maine can meet the State's climate goals of doubling the amount of permanently protected farmland and producing 30% of its food by 2030.

LD 1140 serves as a critical measure to investing in Maine's agriculture and rural economies, while building a resilient food system for all our communities.

Thank you for your time today and I urge the committee to vote ought to pass.
Molly DellaRoman