

Laura Flannery  
Charlotte  
LD 1386

My name is Laura Flannery. I serve on the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine and farm 200 acres of certified-organic wild blueberries in Charlotte (Washington County). I oppose LD 1386 - An Act to Provide Emergency One-time Relief from the Wild Blueberry Tax for Sellers in Maine and Partial Relief for Processors and Shippers. I am very aware of the increasing challenges faced by farmers: field prices remain low while input costs, electricity, and labor costs all continue to rise. Still, the wild blueberry tax will not make or break anyone's farm business. Funds raised through the tax support university research and extension services that help farmers make important crop management decisions. Tax funds are dispersed through the Wild Blueberry Commission to support wild blueberry farms in state and federal policy. Tax funds are also used to support large-scale promotion of Maine wild blueberries. Although the Wild Blueberry Commission has a healthy reserve of funds, nationally, we are in a time of great uncertainty and it would be a mistake to deplete our reserves at this time. Now, more than ever, Maine Wild Blueberry growers need a strong, united, and financially solvent commission that fairly represents all types of growers and processors. My wild blueberry tax dollars give my farm a voice and have more than paid for themselves. I oppose LD 1386.

Thank you,  
Laura Flannery  
Blue Ox Blueberries