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Brunswick
LD 1870

Good morning honorable members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, attending representatives and staff.

My name is Seth Kroeck and I have run Crystal Spring Farm in Brunswick for the past 22 years. I would like to offer testimony in favor of LD 1870. During my time as a commercial grower in Maine I have seen a destabilizing shift in the climate on my farm.

Through the early 2010s we could generally expect the last freeze date of spring to arrive within a week of May 10th. In the fall the first frost would come on or around the equinox in late September. Regular rainfall in April, May and early June would taper to dry Julys and Augusts that would be broken by southern moisture in September. Yes, there were wet years and early frost in this period, but for the most part the anomalies would come one at time and the pendulum would swing back.

These touch points on the calendar are what farmers build a successful growing season on. We need dry periods to prepare fields and plant, kills weeds and cut hay. We need rainfall to water crops, keep soil biology cycling and recharge ponds, rivers and aquifers that allow us to irrigate when necessary.

In addition to disruption of the calendar, we have also experienced extremes in weather events over the season. High winds and heavy rain have damaged crops and eroded soils. Wind speeds in the NE are up more than 4% over the last 22 years and there has been a 70% increase in rainfall totals during heavy precipitation events. The climate disruption that has been building for the past century is effecting food production.

I farm 70 acres of wild blueberries, an iconic crop in this state. In 2 of the last 5 years we have had an exceptionally late frost that has destroyed the entire crop for the year. An average annual wild blueberry harvest for us is 40,000 lbs. and the revenue makes up about 40% of our total.

Those of us that work outside understand that the climate is shifting rapidly and with dire consequences. Fossil fuel producers have understood this as well for decades, and scientists working in this industry were some of the first to understand both the causes and the timelines.

Farming is a business with high risk and low margins even in a predictable season. It is absurd to ask us to find answers and pay for solutions when the industries behind the cause of climate disruption continue to receive federal subsidies and make record profits.