

Brady Hatch
Newcastle resident, Morning Dew Farm
LD 2094

I am writing in support of LD 2094 - An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Support Maine's Agricultural and Forestry Sectors.

My name is Brady Hatch. I am a co-owner of Morning Dew Farm. Our family farm is entering its 22nd season of growing vegetables.

This bond is poised to make a meaning investment in our state's farming and forestry economies. The existing state programs that it funds create impactful change and meaningful growth in the agriculture sector, growth that is only possible when the programs are funded adequately. These are more than talking points for our farm. At one time, the land that is now our farm was once optioned to become a box store super center, and we were a farm business looking for a permanent home for our farm while growing vegetables on leased land. The land is now permanently protected as farmland by an easement and is working farmland that supports a family and several employees, not to mention the community that eats the food we grow and the other local businesses that we support. This wouldn't have been possible without state programs that support working farmland access and protection, and we are just one of many farms that is able to contribute to our local economies thanks to these programs.

When we first started our farm, 2 decades ago, we were able to grow vegetables with little to no irrigation. While we have invested in irrigation resources and equipment over the years, the droughts of recent years, most notably last summer's drought, have shown how vulnerable we are to these increasingly frequent periods of no rain and low humidity. The resources of the Maine Farmers Drought Relief Grant Program and the Maine Healthy Soils Program encourage the investment and smart practices that give farmers like us a chance to build resilience and continue to contribute.

Resilience on farms also comes from having the right tools and a diversity of enterprises. AFFPIF is poised to make meaningful investments in support of the hardworking folks in Maine's farm and forestry sectors. These are all thoughtfully crafted programs. They deserve to be fully funded so they can cultivate the growth in Maine's agricultural economy that they were designed to support with thoughtful investment of taxpayer dollars.