

Asher Putterman
Warren
LD 2094

Dear members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee,
My name is Asher Putterman, my wife and I own and operate On the Mountain Farm a seasonal cut flower business, we are in our 11th year growing cut flowers in Maine. We sell retail through our farm stand and farmers markets, my wife has also been the president of the Camden Farmers Market for 6 years. We also sell wholesale to many florists along the coast between the midcoast area and Portland. We have both completed the MOFGA journey person program and are now mentors for other farmers in the program, we enjoy promoting organic small scale farming techniques and love how much Maine supports small farms. We also have another side of our farm where we grow sun grown medical cannabis seasonally, we see the cannabis as just another crop on our farm, we grow it just like we would tomatoes, and wish to remain a diverse farm, we currently grow about 40 different crops. I'm excited to see this bill coming forward, as having cannabis be a part of the farm, has blocked our ability to access federal grants and assistance that all our peers access to help scale up their infrastructure. Infrastructure is one of the biggest constraints slowing a farms growth and profitability. Its a race when starting a farm on a budget, to get enough infrastructure under you before the labor and lack of income takes you out. As more infrastructure is developed, the jobs and scale of production get more manageable. After a decade farming in Maine we've seen this play out and seen many farmers quit farming for an easier and better paying job. Last year was the first year our farm was able to get a grant even though it was our tenth year serving Maine and it was through a state sponsored program administered through the Maine Farmland Trust. It helped us cover the cost of site work and construction of a greenhouse we had purchased used several years ago, but had not had the extra cashflow at the end of the season to build it until this grant was made available. This new greenhouse will let us begin our wholesale delivery route a month earlier and will greatly help our income grow in a time of year that is usually pretty lean for us. This relatively small grant was so helpful to our farm and I just want to write that in this time of shifting federal funding and to help small farms like ours that due to complex shifting federal issues cannot access NRCS and USDA assistance, having a robust system of support in place will be an actual lifeline to small farms fighting every year for basic profitability in an increasingly challenging marketplace. Please vote ought to pass on this wonderful and commonsense legislation that will support the health of our states farms and forestry products.

Sincerely,
Asher Putterman
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