

25 January 2026

To the Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee

I write asking you to strike line 5 and lines 11-26 from this proposed legislation.

Changing the definition of Agriculture fairs in the State of Maine will have a detrimental impact on 24% of the total number of fairs in Maine resulting in a significant loss to the local and state economy.

Line 26, which requires at least three consecutive days of operation, will immediately close two fairs in rural communities as they offer competition on only two days.

Lines 20-23 could result in the closure of four other rural fairs that have been running for decades in their communities.

According to the 2025 IAFE Economic Impact Survey, these small, rural fairs generate \$107,336 state tax dollars EACH with an average economic impact of \$4,291,617 in their communities. On average each of these fairs supports 31 jobs and generates \$1,452,804 in annual wages in their communities.

The text change proposed in lines 20-26 will have an adverse impact on Maine communities. The loss of these fairs would remove \$25,749,702 in economic activity from rural areas. This text will effectively cost 186 jobs across these communities along with approximately \$650,000 in state tax revenue.

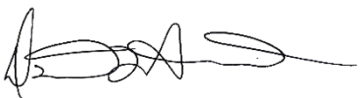
It will result in loss of funds local groups raise each year at the fair to support their community activities. Any local tax generated by these fairs will be lost.

These 61 words of text will cause a financial impact felt in these communities along with the loss of years of dedicated work by generations of Mainers. I am hoping that my testimony is sharing an unintended consequence of well-meaning legislation and not shining a light on a misguided attempt to close fairs in the smallest communities because they somehow don't represent someone's ideal of what an agriculture fair should be.

All of Maine's fairs together contribute not just to the state economy, but to the preservation of things uniquely Maine and to the celebration of the present and future of Maine agriculture.

I plead with you NOT to change the definition of agriculture fair as part of this legislation. Let it be legislation that supports fairs, not kills a quarter of all fairs in the state.

Sincerely,



David Grindle
President and CEO

International Association of Fairs & Expositions