

Matthew Tribou  
Houlton Agricultural Fair  
LD 2096  
LD 2096  
27, 2026

January

Good afternoon Senator Talbot-Ross, Representative Pluecker, and distinguished members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee, My name is Matthew Tribou, and I am the current President of the Houlton Fair Association.

I am writing to express my opposition to LD 2096, specifically Section 1, lines 11–26, and Section 5, which propose changes to the definition of an “agricultural fair.” I am deeply concerned that altering this definition will have significant unintended consequences for agricultural fairs across the state, particularly smaller fairs, and could ultimately place some at risk of closure.

The Houlton Agricultural Fair has been fortunate in recent years to offer multiple animal showings and agricultural educational events. However, when considering the future, circumstances beyond our control—such as weather, staffing challenges, or financial constraints—could prevent us from meeting the requirement of three or more youth agricultural events, three or more species of livestock or poultry, or three or more stipend-eligible non livestock competitions. In addition, it may hold some fair ineligible due not having a minimum of three consecutive licensed fair dates. Under the proposed definition, this could result in disqualification, which would be devastating to our organization. More broadly, imposing such requirements would likely jeopardize many smaller fairs throughout Maine that lack the resources to consistently meet these thresholds.

The Houlton Fair is a longstanding and valued event within our community. Despite ongoing challenges, we continue to move forward and provide families with agricultural education and community-centered programming year after year. We collaborate with multiple nonprofit organizations and educational groups, offering them opportunities for outreach, demonstration, and fundraising while strengthening community engagement. The loss of the Houlton Fair would leave a significant void that would be difficult to replace. I believe the same would be true for many smaller fairs whose importance to their communities cannot be overstated.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to carefully consider the broader impacts of LD 2096 and how changes to the definition of an agricultural fair may affect fairs of all sizes before advancing this legislation.

Unfortunately, I will be unavailable during the work session due to scheduling conflicts; however, I am available by phone or email should you have any questions or wish to discuss these concerns further.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Regards,  
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