



**Testimony of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association
in opposition of LD 2096 - An Act Regarding Scheduling of Agricultural Fairs
and Pulling**

January 27, 2026

Good afternoon Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Committee. My name is April Boucher and I'm the Director for the Common Ground Country Fair, which is hosted by the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA). MOFGA appreciates the opportunity to testify in opposition of LD 2096, An Act Regarding Scheduling of Agricultural Fairs and Pulling, specifically lines 11-26 on page 1 of the bill, Sec.1. MRSA 81, sub-1.

The agricultural fairs of Maine have been successfully supporting and serving their local, and wider communities, for many years, and in some cases for over 200 years. Each Fair is unique and a true celebration of their area's agriculture and community.

As a result, we need to meet Fair's where they are and lift them up with support. The revised agricultural fair definition proposed would put undue hardship, and may even cause the closure, of some of our small and medium sized fairs.

The proposed revised definition also doesn't emphasize education, which is an integral part of our agricultural fairs. Last year 64,420 fairgoers attended the Common Ground Country Fair to avail themselves of over 600 educational opportunities and almost 50 family friendly activities. People keep coming back because we are investing in them, their families, and our communities.

Our Fairs also operate largely because of the skills and hard work of volunteers. For many volunteers, it is hard to take time off from work and many use their vacation time to help make fairs happen. It is also a challenge for farmers to be away from their farms for extended periods of time to exhibit and compete. We should not be 'cancelling' a fair because their volunteers or exhibitors can only be away from their lives for a day or two. We need to meet our Fairs, volunteers, farmers, and exhibitors where they are and lift them up with support.



Thank you and I am happy to answer any questions.

About MOFGA: A broad-based community, MOFGA is transforming our food system by supporting farmers, empowering people to feed their communities, and advocating for an organic future. MOFGA certifies 537 organic farms and processing operations representing more than \$120 million in sales. We're working hard to create opportunities for Maine's next generation of farmers. Each of these farmers is a Maine businessperson for whom economic health and environmental health are interdependent. While MOFGA envisions a future of healthy ecosystems, communities; people, and economies sustained by the practices of organic agriculture, we attribute our success to collaboration and outreach to growers across the management spectrum.