

January 27, 2026

To the Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee, and whom it may concern.

I am writing to testify against LD 2096 specifically Section 1 lines 11-26 and Section 5 of the proposed legislation and the importance of The Springfield Fair to our community.

My name is Ashley LaDuke, I am writing today to speak in support of The Springfield Fair, and in honor of all small fairs in the state of Maine and to share what the loss would truly mean to our community. If The Springfield Fair were to shut down, the impact would be felt immediately and deeply. Local farmers, exhibitors and businesses would lose one of their most important opportunities to showcase their animals, items, skills and businesses. Young people would lose a place where they learn responsibility, work ethics, leadership and community involvement through the agricultural open class exhibits and competitions. For generations, 175 years; the fair has brought farmers, families, volunteers, local businesses and so many others together sharing pride in agriculture, history and tradition that reflects the rural community of Maine.

As the youngest fair President and a privately owned fair I have devoted the last 4 years (3 as owner) in its entirety to learning and working hard. Not only to keep The Springfield Fair alive after years of decline but to improve and grow the overall fair. The evaluations, revenue, attendance and involvement of fairgoers, exhibitors and participants stand to prove my continued progression. I am very concerned that these changes would create more of a struggle to meet qualifications and set back the enhancements that have been made.

The fair is a critical economic engine to our community from local vendors, small business involvement, advertising. Visitors from outside the area come to Springfield specifically for the fair supporting gas station, local nonprofits, hotels, restaurants etc. Losing the fair would leave a huge hole that would not be easily filled for not just our community, but all communities connected with any fair.

Respectfully,

Ashley LaDuke

President – The Springfield Fair

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