

Erik Fitch
Blue Hill Fair
LD 2096

My Name is Erik Fitch, and I am The General Manager of the Blue Hill Fair a Labor Day tradition since 1891. We are one of the 25 licensed agricultural fairs across this beautiful state,

I am making this testimony in opposition to LD 2096. Specifically, to Section 1 lines 11-26 and Section 5

As written, this bill could immensely change the agricultural fair world in all corners of Maine. For some, the ramification could be catastrophic. Some of the fairs that you have come to love and made memories at for entire lifetimes might not be there anymore.

Maine agricultural fairs mean everything to the state of Maine. They are woven into the history, our economy, and our way of life. Maine fairs are a way to connect the public to the very people who raise livestock, grow crops, and produce many of the foods we enjoy. For many Mainers especially children our fairs are the first place they ever see a dairy cow up close, learn where their food really comes from, or understand the hard work of the farmers.

Economically, fairs are critical to communities all across the state. Some of the hardest hit fairs due to this bill are in areas that are already having major financial uncertainties. The Washington County Fair in Pembroke is the newest fair in Maine and is open for two days in August. This fair according to a 2025 economic impact study by Johnson Consulting in partnership with the International Association of Fairs and Expos (IAFE) Washington County Fair had a \$217,000 estimated fiscal impact in that area of the state. The Springfield Fair according to the same study referenced above had an estimated \$790,000 fiscal impact in the rural setting in northern Penobscot County. Both of these fairs could be closed due to the ramifications of this bill.

In closing, we need to protect our Maine fairs at all cost. It one of the oldest traditions that can be enjoyed without the interference of a cell phone. Kids with smiles as big as a Ferris wheel. Grandparents reminiscing of their first date at the local fair with a large cotton candy. Let's keep these opportunities available for the next generation.

Thank you for your time

Erik Fitch
Blue Hill Fair
Blue Hill Maine