

To: **Committee of Health and Human Services Committee**

From: **Isabelle Rogers**

Date: **January 28th, 2026**

Re: **Testimony in support of LD 2144** Resolve, to Establish the Working Group to Prioritize Wellness and Mental Health Resources for Heritage Industries

Honorable members of the Committee of Health and Human Services, my name is Isabelle Rogers. I am a resident of Starks and I am a young person and community organizer with JustME for JustUS, a youth-led organization in rural Maine. I am writing in support of LD 2144 *Resolve, to Establish the Working Group to Prioritize Wellness and Mental Health Resources for Heritage Industries*.

I grew up and live in rural Maine communities, where local farms and businesses are a core foundation of our economy. Many small scale agricultural industries in my area are family-operated and led by multiple generations. I've been a seasonal farm worker and understand the commitment and resilience that local farmers are dedicated to. I've had conversations with my neighbors about the stress of the inconvenient weather and growing seasons, lack of rain leading to scarce hay and crop production, and the burden of keeping small businesses running. I've also seen a mental pressure placed on young farmers to follow through with maintaining a family operation with these challenges.

Mental health is an invisible burden that is affecting many Mainers, yet has been overlooked as a priority issue. It is challenging for people living in rural areas to find access to available mental health resources, and many—especially the working class—have to go without needed support. LD 2144 is a step in the right direction to providing opportunities for support to working people that need them.

Maine's heritage industries are what keeps our state strong and thriving. We need to provide support to the people and future generations keeping these industries alive.

For all the above reasons, I urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 2144.

Sincerely,

Isabelle Rogers