

Rachel Rumson  
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LD 2141

Dear Committee members,

Farmland in Maine is falling out of production faster than conservation efforts can respond. Meanwhile, an estimated \$16 million in bottle deposits go unclaimed. Unlike in other states who use unclaimed bottle deposit funds to serve a public purpose, those funds are currently retained by the beverage industry and are not being used to address the needs of our state.

Please support a Creative Funding Strategy for Farmland Conservation and advance LD 2141, An Act to Direct a Portion of Unclaimed Beverage Container Deposits to the Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund and the Maine Working Farmland Access and Protection Program.

This will direct some of bottle deposit funds to farmland protection and lake restoration efforts. It will create a stream of ongoing, dedicated funding specifically for farmland conservation by directing \$2 million annually from Maine's unclaimed beverage container deposits toward the state's established Working Farmland Access and Protection Program within the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry's (DACF's) Bureau of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Resources.

This act could bolster farmland protection efforts to ensure that Maine farmers have the land they need to farm now and in the future.

P.S. Make it so the new rash of Congressional Review Act land grabs don't take our conservations lands.

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