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LD 2141

I was appalled to learn that annually an estimated \$16 million of unclaimed bottle deposits in the State of Maine are retained by the beverage industry. These are funds that should not be left on the table but directed for the State's public good.

As an advocate for increasing Maine's farmland, I support LD2141. Currently, less than 5 percent of Maine's farmland is protected, the lowest percentage of any state in New England. The State's climate action plan, Maine Won't Wait, establishes new targets specific to farmland protection. One of the most effective ways that we can ramp up farmland protection in Maine is to dedicate funding to existing state programs. The Working Farmland Access and Protection Program provides protection to strategic working farmland properties. The availability and viability of such farmlands are essential to the long-term future of this sector of Maine's economy.

LD 2141 creates a stream of ongoing, dedicated funding specifically for Maine's Working Farmland Access and Protection Program without raising taxes, without changing consumer behavior, and without disrupting the bottle redemption system.

Thank you for your commitment to serving the people of Maine.