

Samuel Ricker
Auburn
LD 2212

TESTIMONY OF SAM RICKER

Ricker Hill Orchards / Apple Ridge Farms — Auburn, Maine
February 27, 2026

Re: Support for LD 2212 (Supplemental Budget for fiscal years ending June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027)

Senators Rotundo and Talbot Ross, Representatives Gattine and Pluecker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry:

My name is Sam Ricker. I am a full-time apple grower in Auburn at Ricker Hill Orchards and Apple Ridge Farms. I also serve as Immediate Past President of the Maine Pomological Society and as Vice President and a board member of the Agricultural Council of Maine.

I am writing in support of LD 2212 and to urge you to make practical, near-term investments that keep Maine's orchards viable. Apple farms are facing rising costs, unpredictable weather impacts, and tight margins. Without timely capital support, growers delay repairs and upgrades—and more acreage comes out of production.

Please use LD 2212 to prioritize and fund:

The Maine Agriculture, Food System and Forest Products Infrastructure Investment Fund—so farms can access grants and low-interest financing for essential projects like orchard system repairs, storm-damage restoration, storage and handling improvements, and efficiency upgrades.

The Farmers Drought Resiliency Fund—to support water security projects like wells, ponds, pumping capacity, and irrigation that protect perennial crops and stabilize production.

Thank you for your time and for acting this session.

Respectfully submitted,

Sam Ricker

Ricker Hill Orchards / Apple Ridge Farms — Auburn, Maine
Immediate Past President, Maine Pomological Society
Vice President and Board Member, Agricultural Council of Maine