

To: Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry  
From: Jackson Chadwick, Maine Youth for Climate Justice  
Date: Thursday, March 5, 2026



RE: Testimony in Support of L.D. 299: An Act to Build a Viable Future for Maine Agriculture

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Dear Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and respected members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry,

Good morning. My name is Jackson Chadwick, and I am the Advocacy & Organizing Director for Maine Youth for Climate Justice (MYCJ), and I live in Bangor. MYCJ supports youth under 30 in advocating for climate action and justice through legislative efforts, community involvement, and educational initiatives. Our members range from high school and college students to young adults in Maine's diverse workforce.

I am testifying today in support of L.D. 299: An Act to Build a Viable Future for Maine Agriculture.

This bill aims to strengthen the Maine Agriculture, Food and Forest Products Investment Fund (AFFPIF) by offering grants and low-interest loans to food producers. AFFPIF prioritizes support for Maine-based food producers, including businesses in rural, lower-income areas.

AFFPIF aims to have 30% of food consumed in Maine sourced from local producers by 2030, which is a key reason MYCJ backs this bill. Sourcing locally produced food for consumption in the state will reduce Maine's reliance on food imports, strengthen local food systems, and lower greenhouse gas emissions associated with transporting food from out of state.

A 2021 report from the Maine Department of Economic & Community Development<sup>1</sup> found that Maine imports a staggering 90% of all food consumed in the state, with just 10% produced and consumed locally. Reaching the 30% target mentioned above is challenging but achievable with collaboration and commitment from the State and various industries.

On behalf of MYCJ's members, we respectfully ask you to support L.D. 299 to strengthen our local food systems and increase food security in Maine.

Sincerely,



Jackson Chadwick  
Advocacy & Organizing Director  
Maine Youth for Climate Justice  
[jackson@mycj.org](mailto:jackson@mycj.org)

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<sup>1</sup> Maine State of Domestic Trade Annual Report. *Maine Department of Economic & Community Development*. March 2023.  
<https://www.maine.gov/decd/sites/maine.gov/decd/files/inline-files/Final%20Report%20-%20Macro%20Overview%20-%20DECD-March%202023.pdf>