

**Testimony of (Logan McLaughlin), Potato Producer, (West Ridge Farms, Inc.) to the
Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
March 19, 2026**

LD473 An Act to Support Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry in Maine

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker and members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee, I am Logan McLaughlin, a Maine potato grower from Mars Hill. I am here today to speak in favor of LD473.

I am part of the seventh generation on our family potato farm known as West Ridge Farms, Inc. We grow a total of 1,000 acres of potatoes for processors and the seed industry. Our family takes great pride in being part of such a great farming community in Aroostook County. A community that has been built by generations of hard working individuals with the same goal of continuing Maine's tradition of producing high quality potatoes.

This proposed bill will update and strengthen the protections to our Maine potato production system by keeping out pests that have the potential to severely limit Maine potato growers' abilities to market potatoes, whether seed, table stock, or processing.

Being a part of a nationwide grower community and "family" of potato growers, we are empathetic to the growers that quarantines or regulations effect, but we, Maine potato growers, cannot afford to find ourselves in the same regulatory circumstances. The impacts to our Maine agricultural systems, should these pests become established here, would far exceed the impacts of our regulations on the states or areas proposed in this bill.

Should these pests be found in our production area, the costs will be substantial; entire fields may be taken out of production due to pest presence; costs of production will increase to include control measures such as sanitation, surveillance, and disinfection; and lastly, increased use of pesticides to include nematicides and/or fumigants will incur excessive financial and environmental costs to growers and their farms. I hope by hearing my concerns and the concerns of my peers, you will understand the importance on this matter. We need to keep Maine family farms sustainable and provide future generations the opportunity to succeed in the potato farming industry.

Thank you,

Logan McLaughlin
West Ridge Farms, Inc.