



## Agriculture

## Agriculture



*Office of the Minister*

PO Box 2000, Charlottetown  
Prince Edward Island  
Canada C1A 7N8

*Bureau du ministre*

C.P. 2000, Charlottetown  
île-du-Prince-Édouard  
Canada C1A 7N8

March 19, 2026

Thank you for the opportunity to provide a submission on **LD 473 - An Act to Support Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry in Maine**.

As Prince Edward Island (PEI) is mentioned in the proposed bill and has a substantial potato industry, we have concerns and are seeking clarification on a few areas of the bill:

- It is unclear whether the proposed changes apply only to seed potatoes, or to fresh and processed potatoes as well.
- We are seeking clarity on whether “may not enter the State” means that potatoes and potato products could not pass through the state while being transported to another destination.

A prohibition to enter or transit the state of Maine would have devastating impacts on our PEI economy.

The US market is a major destination for PEI potato products. In 2025, the US accounted for 92.7% of total PEI potato exports, with sales valued at \$859.68 million (Global Trade Tracker, 2026).

Seven of the top ten states for US exports are located on the eastern seaboard, representing about 74% of all our potato exports to the US. Due to Maine’s geographic position, this means that most of the fresh and processed PEI potatoes going to US states transit through Maine. If we weren’t able to ship potatoes through Maine, it would have severe economic impacts on both sides of the border.

Prince Edward Island remains committed to the highest standards of biosecurity and continues to take all necessary measures to control and prevent the spread of soil borne plant pests. For example:

- PEI has implemented the National Potato Wart Response Plan (2025), ensuring a consistent, science-based approach to managing and mitigating the risks associated with soil-borne plant pests under close regulatory oversight by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.
- The response plan requires all growers on restricted land to maintain a Preventative Control Plan outlining biosecurity, soil-management, and equipment sanitation protocols for identifying and controlling potential risks associated with plant pests.
- All PEI fresh potato exports are from unrestricted fields and comply with all U.S. import requirements.
- Extensive soil sampling and surveillance activities are conducted annually, including more than 50,000 samples collected and analyzed since 2021, to support early detection and long-term containment of regulated pests. Annual surveillance includes sampling of unrestricted fields throughout the province.

Collectively, these and other measures ensure that Prince Edward Island maintains one of the strongest biosecurity and phytosanitary systems in North America, supporting safe trade and protecting plant health.

Our industry has a long history of safe, reliable trade with the United States, including the State of Maine, built on mutual trust and adherence to internationally accepted plant health protocols. Current cross-border trade operates under stringent regulatory frameworks enforced by both Canadian and U.S. authorities, including collaboration with the United States Department of Agriculture. These systems ensure that only certified, inspected, and compliant potatoes enter U.S. markets.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bloyce Thompson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Hon. Bloyce Thompson

Minister of Agriculture

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Tel /Tél.: 902 368 4820 [princeedwardisland.ca](http://princeedwardisland.ca) Fax /Télec. : 902 368 4846