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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



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COMMISSIONER

TESTIMONY OF
**BRIAN KAVANAH, DIRECTOR
BUREAU OF WATER QUALITY
MAINE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF L.D. 315

**AN ACT TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR DROUGHT RELIEF
AND OTHER PROGRAMS BENEFITTING MAINE FARMERS**

SPONSORED BY SENATOR INGWERSEN

**BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY**

DATE OF HEARING:

FEBRUARY 13, 2023

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Committee, I am Brian Kavanah, Director of the Bureau of Water Quality at the Department of Environmental Protection. I am speaking in support of L.D. 315.

As I noted during the Committee briefing on February 1, with Deputy Commissioner McBrady, regarding the legislative irrigation report required by L.D. 1998, the DEP interacts with farmers in various ways regarding irrigation. Most importantly, there are regulatory requirements for water withdrawals directly from surface waters. The DEP understands the importance of irrigation to Maine’s farmers. We are supportive of

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assistance to farmers to help them develop irrigation ponds and wells to reduce direct withdrawals from surface waters which, during times of even moderate drought, will likely not have the capacity to support direct withdrawal for irrigation and still meet state water quality standards.

Also, as outlined in the L.D. 1998 report, farmers could benefit from a variety of assistance services from DACF and DEP that the agencies do not now have the capacity to provide, particularly in Aroostook County which has historically been underserved.

In closing, enactment of L.D. 315 would fill this important gap in funding and services. I ask your support of L.D. 315 and I would be happy to answer any questions you have, now, or at the work session.

Thank you.