



Stacy Brenner
Senator, District 30

THE MAINE SENATE
131st Legislature

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**Testimony of Senator Stacy Brenner in Support of LD 901, “Resolve, to Establish a Pilot Project to Support Farm Apprenticeships in Maine”
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
March 15, 2023**

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and Esteemed Colleagues on the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, my name is Stacy Brenner. I represent Senate District 30, which includes all of Gorham and most of Scarborough. I’m pleased to testify in support LD 901, “Resolve, to Establish a Pilot Project to Support Farm Apprenticeships in Maine.”

This legislation would promote not only sustainability for Maine’s farms but also local commerce by nurturing and building a highly skilled workforce. The shortage of labor in the farming industry, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic has put many Maine farms in jeopardy. Workers are asked to do the work normally done by two or three people. Agriculture is such an integral part of Maine’s economy and heritage that it’s important for us to find pathways to support farms and farmers across the state.

This bill proposes one such pathway to support this industry. This pilot program would connect young, passionate farmers with the leaders of the farming community, which is a powerful way to support farms and ensure their success for the future. With this legislation, I would be able to pass on my knowledge to younger generations, who could one day, own and run a sustainable farm of their own. By opening the door for aspiring farmers to have on-the-job experience, we would be providing critical investments for the agricultural industry as a whole.

Additionally, local commerce would thrive and enhance our ability to provide homegrown products to our communities. By expanding the number of farmers, and potentially the number of farms in Maine, we would be able to help grow local markets. Investing in this program would benefit us all in the long term.

Thank you for your consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions.