



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
22 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

AMANDA E. BEAL
COMMISSIONER

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

LD 1021

An Act to Enhance Awareness of Laboratory Testing of Ticks for Lyme Disease

March 20, 2023

Senator Ingwerson, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, my name is Nancy McBrady. I am the Deputy Commissioner at the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF), speaking on LD 1021, "*An Act to Enhance Awareness of Laboratory Testing of Ticks for Lyme Disease.*"

LD 1021 is a concept bill and, therefore, does not provide adequate information for the Department to take a position on the bill before us today. However, we'd like to offer the following considerations for the Committee.

Several DACF staff are long-standing members of the CDC's Vector-Borne Disease Work Group. As such, we are well acquainted with and appreciative of the work of the University of Maine Tick Lab. DACF staff across several Bureaus are happy to lend their expertise to Maine's ongoing efforts to combat tick-borne illnesses.

The Tick Lab at the University of Maine was established in 2019. Since then, the lab has tested nearly 15,000 ticks, surveilling for several tick-borne pathogens, with Lyme being the most prevalent and best known.

Tick-borne illnesses, including Lyme, anaplasmosis, and others, significantly threaten animal and human health. Testing ticks from public submissions is one method of understanding the prevalence of these pathogens and is an integral part of the Tick Lab program. Increased use of the program would improve knowledge of the threats posed by ticks in Maine.

Farmers, foresters, loggers, landowners, visitors, and other community members can benefit from improved knowledge of tick-borne illnesses in the state when it motivates them to engage in personal protection measures.

DACF would be happy to have staff attend the work session when further details of LD 1021 are shared.