



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST LD 1612

An Act to Address Food Insecurity and Support Local Agriculture

April 19, 2023

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, my name is Craig Lapine, and I am the Director of the Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources. I am speaking on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) as neither for nor against LD 1612, *An Act to Address Food Insecurity and Support Local Agriculture*.

The Department is well acquainted with the Preble Street Food Security Hub. Staff has visited and been briefed on the project, and one of our Ending Hunger Corps VISTA members, Izzy Newman, is placed at the hub. With its emphasis on prepared and delivered meals, it is our understanding that the food hub is already filling a unique niche in the food security ecosystem, and that when complete, the hub will play a critical role in the emergency food infrastructure of southern Maine.

LD 1612 specifically identifies Preble Street as the recipient of these funds and would put in statute the reporting requirements associated with the funds. Should the Legislature approve and fund the bill, it is our hope that these provisions are enough to streamline the funding process. The Department recommends that the Division of Procurement Services be consulted to confirm that the bill language would achieve its intent most efficiently and that it is consistent with State purchasing processes. The Department also asks the Committee to reconsider the report back date currently specified as December 6th of this year. If this proposal is successful, funds will not be available until 90 days after adjournment, and additional administrative time will be needed to disburse them.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I would be happy to answer questions now or during the work session.

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