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2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

William D. Pluecker

1133 Finntown Road

Warren, ME 04864

Phone: (207) 273-3044

Bill.pluecker@legislature.maine.gov

Testimony of Rep. Bill Pluecker introducing
**LD 2256, An Act to Provide Emergency One-time Relief from the Wild
Blueberry Tax for Growers in Maine**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Sen. Ingwersen, Rep. Hall and members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee, thank you for the chance to present LD 2256, “**An Act to Provide Emergency One-time Relief from the Wild Blueberry Tax for Growers in Maine.**”

All wild blueberries grown and/or processed in Maine are taxed at a rate of one and a half cents per pound, half of which is paid by “processors” and half of which is paid by “growers.” This tax is allocated to the activities of the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine with none of the tax going into the general fund.

The Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine works in support of Maine's wild blueberry industry. The Commission has enough reserves that a one-time reduction in the tax allocation will not impact its ability to pursue long-term profitability for growers and processors.

The industry is facing growing challenges that include competition from cultivated blueberry industry, increased government-supported production of wild blueberries in Canada, and dramatic increases in the cost of production over the last three years.

Considering these challenges, the Wild Blueberry Commission itself, which is composed of growers and businesses from across Maine, is asking for a one-time pause of the grower tax of three quarters of one cent per pound of wild blueberries grown in the State of Maine.

My hope is that this bill will provide some relief for the growers as they face increasing pressure from inflation and climate change.