



L & P BISSON & SONS, INC.

112 Meadow Road
Topsham, Maine 04086
207-725-7215

To Whom It May Concern:
March 4, 2025

We at L&P Bisson & Sons in Topsham would like to voice our opinion concerning the Holiday Schedule.

The Federal Holidays we can work around, but in the case where an extra day is added for an additional day off is unacceptable.

We are an operating business which is our livelihood. Extra days off during an inspection day does not work for us. We have animals scheduled and if extra days are taken it makes it difficult to reschedule because we are already booked solid.

For the most part, our inspectors try their best to accommodate us, but when an extra day is taken it is a hardship for us. Therefore, we urge you to consider only the Federal Holiday off and not the extra day. Thank you.

Sincerely

Arthur Bisson co-owner

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arthur Bisson", written over a horizontal line.



Maple Lane Farms LLC.

224 Charleston Rd
Charleston, ME 04422
(207) 285-3591

March 6, 2025

To the Department of Conservation, Forestry and
Agricultural Committee

My name is Barry Higgins Sr.
I am here today as the representative for Maple Lane
Farms in Charleston, Maine.

We farm about 1800 acres in Central Penobscot County.
We are highly diversified. We have a dairy and cattle
operation, and we feed about 650-900 head of livestock
365 days of the year. Along with our cattle operation we
raised 600-700 acres of corn, hay, and haylage we provide
for our farms and several other farms throughout Maine.

In 2006 we built a new slaughter and processing facility on
our farm in Charleston, Maine and processing under
Maine's Red Meat and Poultry Inspection Services. We
now operate under the Cooperative Interstate Shipment
program. We have been told that we could go to the
Federal Program. We have refrained from doing that as we
feel it may leave a hole in the State program.

The state needs a program for the small processors. We
are a part of that, offering the ability to have new
inspectors do training in our facility.

Through the years we have grown our custom, retail, wholesale, and private labeling services for farmers throughout Maine. There are roughly 50 Beef, dairy, pork and sheep farms that we do inspection for.

I believe that the Buy Local movement is growing rapidly and could be beneficial to the Ag Economy. Farmers and processors are essential to grow the agricultural sector in Rural Maine. We need the ability to run our processing plants efficiently for this to happen.

Over the years we have expanded our business to the point that we require 4-5 days a week of full-time inspection. Our operation inspection time is 7:00 am to 4:00 pm Monday- Thursday for slaughter and processing. Fridays we have processing inspection from 7:00 am to 11:00 am.

Around 3 years ago we approached this committee and requested to put a bill in to have the inspectors deemed as essential employees. During that time, we were having complications due to reoccurring snow days or delays. This issue was thankfully corrected, and we have been able to have less random disruptions to the slaughter and processing process throughout the year. This was greatly appreciated as delays can not only affect the workforce. It can add stress onto the animals having to be held longer than necessary.

That is a major factor that is why we must finish the job. As of now there are major holidays that have been given extended days off. We are given holiday schedules early on. We work to use their holiday schedule to configure our slaughter and processing schedule for the year. There are many farmers who set their appointments months in advance to lock in certain dates. When holidays are extended at the last minute it creates an after effect where the processor, the farmer, restaurants, stores, etc. must scramble to pick up the pieces.

Examples of this occurring are July 4th which fell on a Thursday. Two weeks before the holiday Governor Mills allotted to have July 5th off.

November 28th Thanksgiving was allotted to have Friday November 29th off.

Wednesday December 25th – 2 weeks prior it was announced the 24th would be a day off as well.

These events may seem small to some of you. What we as the processor are looking at is a 3-day work week to process 60-75 critters.

It can lead to what some would look at as a humane handling issue. There are occasions where people drop off the night before their appointment, they must sit for an extended holiday or weekend that is roughly 3-4 days. We

work to the best of our ability to keep the critters fed, watered and safe. But any animal after transportation in a new area is going to be worked up or have some stress.

We cannot slaughter or process without inspectors on the premises. They are essential to be able to proficiently work. This is not just an issue of a few days off. This is the issue of the domino effect. The whole picture must be looked at, the repercussions of one decision on the whole industry. The issue is not one day it is the 4 days it equals up to. It is the 365 days of the year that have already been planned for that must be reconfigured on short notice. When we are already operating at full compacity this is not an easy feature to do.

I am hoping there are questions. I would be happy to help to validate the necessity of this bill. To give an insight into the effects behind the scenes this bill could have.

Thank you for your time,
Barry E. Higgins

Packaged by:
MAPLE LANE FARMS
222 Charleston Road
Charleston, ME 04422
207-285-3591
www.maplelanefarmsmaine.com



*NO ARTIFICIAL INGREDIENTS
MINIMALLY PROCESSED

NET WEIGHT _____
KEEP REFRIGERATED, MAY BE FROZEN

SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS

THIS PRODUCT WAS PREPARED FROM INSPECTED AND PASSED MEAT AND/OR POULTRY. SOME FOOD PRODUCTS MAY CONTAIN BACTERIA THAT COULD CAUSE ILLNESS IF THE PRODUCT IS MISHANDLED OR COOKED IMPROPERLY. FOR YOUR PROTECTION, FOLLOW THESE SAFE HANDLING INSTRUCTIONS.



KEEP REFRIGERATED OR FROZEN. THAW IN REFRIGERATOR OR MICROWAVE. KEEP RAW MEAT AND POULTRY SEPARATE FROM OTHER FOODS.



WASH WORKING SURFACES (INCLUDING CUTTING BOARDS), UTENSILS, AND HANDS AFTER TOUCHING RAW MEAT OR POULTRY.



COOK THOROUGHLY.



KEEP HOT FOODS HOT. REFRIGERATE LEFTOVERS IMMEDIATELY OR DISCARD.