



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002  
(207) 287-1400  
TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

**Anne Graham**

P.O. Box 66

Yarmouth, Maine 04096

Phone: 207-287-1430

[Anne.Graham@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:Anne.Graham@legislature.maine.gov)

March 6, 2025

*Testimony of Representative Anne Graham sponsoring*  
**LD 415, An Act to Support Hunger Prevention in Maine**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry*

Good morning, Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. I am Representative Annie Graham and I represent House District 105, which includes North Yarmouth and most of Gray. I am here today to present **LD 415, An Act to Support Hunger Prevention in Maine**.

This bill provides an additional \$1M per year to the Statewide Hunger Relief Program, administered by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. The Statewide Hunger Relief Program currently provides \$1M per year to Mainers Feeding Mainers, which is administered by Good Shepherd Food Bank. This investment will bring the state's contribution to \$2M annually. Good Shepherd Food Bank currently spends an additional \$2M of donor dollars to support Mainers Feeding Mainers and will continue to dedicate donor dollars to the program.

Mainers Feeding Mainers is a collaborative initiative by Good Shepherd Food Bank aimed at enhancing food security in Maine by sourcing fresh, locally produced food from Maine farmers and fishermen. This program provides nutritious food to those accessing community food pantries and also supports local agricultural and fishing communities.

### **Key Aspects of the Program:**

- **Local Sourcing:** Good Shepherd Food Bank partners with 100 farms across Maine, including fruit and vegetable growers, dairy farmers, and fishermen to supply fresh produce and seafood to community pantries statewide.
- **Economic Impact:** By purchasing directly from local producers, Mainers Feeding Mainers invests directly into the state's agriculture economy, providing a predictable and reliable purchaser for 100 farms statewide and increasing the financial security of those farmers.
- **Nutritional Benefits:** This initiative ensures that individuals facing food insecurity have access to a diverse array of healthy, fresh foods, including fruits, vegetables, fish and meat. This helps improve the overall nutritional quality of meals for those accessing food pantries.

- **Community Engagement:** The program fosters a sense of community by connecting local producers with consumers, promoting the consumption of Maine-grown foods, and supporting sustainable agricultural and fishing practices. While some produce is moved from the farm to the food bank to community pantries, most is moved directly from the farm to the community pantry.
- **Community Resiliency:** As we continue to prepare for unpredictable shifts in weather and international trade that may disrupt supply chain of both domestic and international food, Mainers Feeding Mainers increases our local resiliency today and in the future.

Our state is facing an extremely unpredictable future as the federal government slashes programs that support farmers and fisherman, cuts food support for low income Mainers and forces farm workers off the fields in the south and west. I volunteer at my local food pantry where we have been busier than ever. I will always recall the mom who came to pick up food with tears in her eyes because she was ashamed that she couldn't afford food for her children. This bill will help our community members who are struggling more than ever to put food on their tables, and the farmers who are working hard to provide nutritious food and stay in business. This bill is a win-win for us all.

In this difficult budget season, I ask you to prioritize LD 415 and unanimously vote ought to pass.

Thank you for your consideration.