

LD 415
An Act to Support Hunger Prevention in Maine

Penelope (Penny) Jordan
(207) 671-5341
pennyjordan@jordansfarm.com

21 Wells Road
Cape Elizabeth, ME 04107

Senator Talbot-Ross, Representative Pluecker, and members of the committee I am Penny Jordan, one of the owners of Jordan's Farm a 5th generation mixed vegetable farm in Cape Elizabeth and I am here to testify in support of LD 415. I present this position from the perspective of a grower who for the past 20 years has worked with Good Shepherd Food Bank, Preble Street, Wayside Food Programs and other organizations to address food insecurity in our state.

I have stood here in previous years to express my support for the Mainers Feed Mainers program. The additional funds for MFM are more important than ever. SNAP benefits are targeted to be cut at the national level, the cost of food will increase because of expense pressures on farms, household expenses will increase, and people (seniors, two income families, single parents and others) that never expected to access a food pantry will find themselves needing assistance.

If you have not heard of ALICE (asset limited income constrained and employed) households, you need to learn about them. These households earn above the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) but cannot afford the basic cost of living in their county. "Despite struggling to make ends meet, ALICE households often do not qualify for public assistance." They equate to 30% of Maine households, add that to 12% poverty and you have 42% of Maine households that are income challenged. And as we look at the months and years ahead this isn't going to get better.

We will need to increase the amount of food available to the food banks and food pantries and work to create a resilient food system. MFM will help both.

I work with several growers to aggregate their products and distribute them through existing distribution channels. My goal as a Maine producer is to feed people and help grow Maine agriculture. I recognize that these additional dollars will challenge an already tight budget, but as

the federal government starts to leave people to fend for themselves, we as a state need to determine how we will ensure our neighbors have access to healthy food, and I know Maine farms are here to help.

Thank you and I encourage you to vote ought to pass.

Note: Maine 2022: 594,350 total households; 30%=249,725 ALICE households

ALICE link: <https://www.unitedforalice.org/state-overview/maine>