



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
22 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

AMANDA E. BEAL
COMMISSIONER

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

IN SUPPORT OF LD 1297

Resolve, to Establish the Committee to Study the Use of Sunflower Crops to Produce Biofuels

April 10, 2025

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, my name is Craig Lapine. I am the Director of the Bureau of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Resources. I am testifying on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry (DACF) in support of LD 1297, *Resolve, to Establish the Committee to Study the Use of Sunflower Crops to Produce Biofuels*.

Sunflowers are a quick-growing summer annual broadleaf cover crop that can help improve soil health and prevent erosion. They also host pollinators and beneficial insects. Like canola and soybeans, sunflowers are an oilseed crop that can be processed into food-grade oil products, sustainable biofuel, and oilseed meal for livestock feed.

According to the USDA's 2022 Agricultural Census, Maine has 4,931 farms that harvest 355,845 acres of cropland. This statistic underscores the opportunity for strategic exploration and potential growth of this crop, particularly in Aroostook County. Further, DACF supports new opportunities for agricultural producers that enhance on-farm efficiencies and expand new markets, while contributing to the growth of rural economies.

The Department is happy to have staff present at the work session if further discussion is needed.

HARLOW BUILDING
18 ELKINS LANE
AUGUSTA, MAINE



PHONE: (207) 287-3200
FAX: (207) 287-2400
WWW.MAINE.GOV/DACF