

Testimony of Cary A. Nash on April 23, 2025 in opposition to L.D. 1386 – An Act to Provide Emergency One-Time Relief from the Wild Blueberry Tax for Sellers in Maine and Partial Relief for Processors and Shippers

Thank you, Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation.

My name is Cary Nash from Camden. I am a Wild Blueberry grower and have been involved in the Wild Blueberry industry for most of my life. I have served on various Wild Blueberry committees, associations, and study groups since the 1980's. I am currently a Commissioner of the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine. I stand here in opposition to L.D. 1386. I am certain that in the eighty or so years that Wild Blueberry growers have paid the Industry requested tax on Wild Blueberries, we have been repaid many times over by the research, dissemination of information, and promotion of Wild Blueberries made possible by pooling our resources through the Wild Blueberry Tax. At $\frac{3}{4}$ cents per pound, the Wild Blueberry tax on growers amounts to only \$10/acre to \$40/acre, depending on yield. That expense is not making or breaking the Wild Blueberry grower. I do not wish to step backwards now from the progress being made by the Wild Blueberry industry through the use of the funds generated by the Wild Blueberry tax.

At an October 8, 2024 Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine meeting, I made a motion "to retain the Wild Blueberry tax at its current rate ($\frac{3}{4}$ cents per pound from the processor and $\frac{3}{4}$ cents per pound from growers)". It passed 5 in favor, 2 opposed, 1 abstention.

At a January 21, 2025 meeting of the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine in a straw poll of Commissioners, 5 voted to not support a bill to reduce tax, 3 voted to ask for grower relief.

At the March 4, 2025 meeting of the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine, I made a motion "to leave the Wild Blueberry tax alone for now and oppose Representative Strout's Bill". My motion passed 6 votes in favor, 3 votes against.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak in opposition to L.D. 1386.