



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
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JANET T. MILLS
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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

OPPOSED TO LD 1601

An Act to Create Parity in Poultry Processing and Farming Licenses and Inspections

April 24, 2025

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, my name is Megan Patterson, Director of the Division of Animal and Plant Health within the Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources. I am speaking on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry in opposition to LD 1601, *An Act to Create Parity in Poultry Processing and Farming Licenses and Inspections*.

The Department appreciates the intent of LD 1601, which appears to be ensuring uniformity and quality in the operation of the Maine Meat and Poultry Inspection Program (MMPI), a goal to which we are also committed. We were here a few weeks ago speaking to LD 1198, *Resolve, Directing the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to Assess its Current Meat and Poultry Inspection Program*, which was passed out of the Committee unanimously. As discussed at both the public hearing and the work session for LD 1198, the Department has begun the necessary steps to undertake this assessment, which will include holding listening sessions and administering a survey as part of our review, and the Department welcomes input from farmers, processors, and other interested stakeholders. We are committed to meeting the report-back deadline of January 15, 2026, which includes language allowing this Committee to submit legislation related to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

We respectfully ask that the Department be allowed to complete the work directed by LD 1198 by the agreed-upon deadline and not have assignments that appear to be duplicative added to the Department's 360-degree review of the Program. Furthermore, we do not have the capacity to host an ongoing stakeholder group with our existing resources.

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Thank you for your time. We will gladly have staff at the work session who can answer any questions.