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LD 1601: An Act to Create Parity in Poultry Processing and Farming Licenses and Inspections

Sponsor: Representative Amanda Collamore
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Senator Talbot-Ross, Representative Pluecker, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, my name is Amanda Collamore and I have the great honor of representing House District 68, Pittsfield, Clinton, Burnham, and Troy. I stand before you today to present **LD 1601: An Act to Create Parity in Poultry Processing and Farming Licenses and Inspections**.

This bill addresses a long-standing challenge in our agricultural community: the inconsistent application and interpretation of USDA regulations and exemptions among inspectors at the state and local levels. These discrepancies don't just create confusion—they can impose unfair burdens on farmers and processors, lead to unnecessary delays, and in some cases, risk the viability of small, family-run operations.

There is nothing more frustrating than preparing your facilities and processes to meet the standards communicated by one inspector, only to have a different inspector the following year—or even the following month—provide an entirely new interpretation of the very same rules. What should be a consistent and collaborative effort to ensure food safety becomes instead an unpredictable and sometimes adversarial process.

This bill proposes the formation of a stakeholder group—one that includes farmers and processors from every county in Maine, across a range of scales and agricultural sectors. By including both conventional and organic farmers and producers from all 16 of Maine's counties, the bill ensures a broad representation of the real-world conditions and challenges faced by those who grow and process our food.

The goal of this group—to create a **uniform interpretation of USDA regulations and exemptions in Maine**—is both practical and deeply needed. With clear, stable, and consistent standards, farmers and processors can focus on doing what they do best: producing safe, high-quality food for our communities.

Furthermore, the bill includes a five-year transition period for existing license holders to come into compliance with any new interpretations developed by the stakeholder group. This shows a thoughtful understanding of the need for gradual implementation, and provides time for

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education, training, and necessary adjustments without placing immediate financial or operational stress on producers.

This act doesn't seek to relax food safety standards—it seeks to **clarify them**, ensure they're applied equitably, and maintain continuity across inspection agencies and inspectors. It fosters a regulatory environment that is predictable, transparent, and farmer-friendly.

I strongly encourage you to support this important step toward fairness and clarity in Maine's agricultural inspection system. Let's work together to strengthen the relationship between regulators and the farming community, and build a future where consistency and cooperation guide our shared mission of food safety and agricultural prosperity.

Thank you for your time, and I welcome any questions you may have.