



Stacy Brenner
Senator, District 30

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony of Senator Stacy Brenner introducing
**LD 1605, An Act to Support Farmers and Food Banks Affected by Federal
Funding Cuts to Their Existing Contracts**
Before the Joint Standing Committee Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

April 24, 2025

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and fellow members of the Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee. My name is Stacy Brenner, and I represent Senate District 30, which includes most of Scarborough and all of Gorham. I am here today to introduce **LD 1605**, “*An Act to Support Farmers and Food Banks Affected by Federal Funding Cuts to Their Existing Contracts.*”

After communicating with officials at the Department, we’d like to move in a different direction with **LD 1605**. We are proposing an **amendment to this bill** that we believe better reflects the urgent needs of Maine’s farming community.

The amendment would **strike the current language** and replace it with language that **modifies the Agricultural Marketing Loan Fund**—allowing loans to be granted to farmers for two critical, additional uses:

1. **To respond to the loss of federal grants or loans, and**
2. **To recover in the event of a disaster.**

This is not a hypothetical concern. Farmers across Maine are facing unprecedented challenges—from increasingly erratic and extreme weather to the uncertainty of federal support. Weather-related disasters like flooding, drought, and early frosts can devastate a farm overnight. And when USDA funding is cut or delayed, the impacts can ripple through an entire season—or even force a farm to close its doors forever.

Federal disaster relief is often slow and doesn’t always reach smaller or diversified farms. Private loans can come with interest rates that compound financial strain. And our current state programs don’t yet fill this gap.

By expanding the Agricultural Marketing Loan Fund to include **disaster recovery and loss of federal funding**, we’re not creating a new bureaucracy—we’re strengthening a trusted tool. This is about giving our farmers access to **low-interest, state-backed loans** when they need them most: to recover, to rebuild, and to continue feeding our communities.



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This is a smart, targeted investment in **rural resilience, food security, and the future of Maine agriculture.**

Let's make sure our farmers know they're not alone when the worst happens. Let's give them the tools to stay on the land and keep Maine growing.

Thank you, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

Stacy Brenner
State Senator, District 30