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132nd MAINE SENATE

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**LD 1012, “An Act to Fund the Operations of the University of Maine
Cooperative Extension Tick Laboratory”
Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs
April 23, 2025**

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs:

My name is Brad Farrin and I represent Senate District 3. I am here to introduce LD 1012, “An Act to Fund the Operations of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Tick Laboratory.”

Let me start by giving a brief history of why we have this bill. In the 129th Legislature, LD 1518 was enacted on January 12, 2020. The bill placed a 15-cent fee on all consumer-packaged pesticides, with 65% of the revenue going to the Tick Lab for operations. Unfortunately, this was just as the pandemic hit; and between that and trying to sort out which pesticides were to be included under the fee, it was a tall order. The expectation was that this might eventually generate about \$600,000 annually for lab operations.

It didn’t go as smoothly as hoped. So, in the 130th Legislature, I submitted a bill—LD 808—which repealed the 15-cent fee. The Governor agreed to allocate \$500,000 annually in the budget to replace the lost revenue, which she did; however, the Appropriations Committee did not go along with it and removed the funding from the budget. The following year, the Governor put the \$500,000 back in; but it was cut to \$250,000 and ultimately passed.

That brings us to this bill. The hope is that it will eventually raise \$350,000 annually for the Tick Lab. I’m sure someone from BABLO will testify in opposition, saying there’s a finite amount of money spent on scratch-off tickets annually, and this will just add one more ticket to the mix.

However, we’ve tried to design this a little differently. First, it is a \$4 ticket. Currently, we don’t have any of those. I’m not sure why. The thinking is that a \$4 ticket might also give a boost to \$1 and \$2 ticket sales. Someone might walk in, hand over a \$5 bill for a \$4 ticket, and say, “Just give me any \$1 ticket.” The same could happen with a \$10 bill—two \$4 tickets and, “Ah, give me any \$2 ticket.” I realize we’re not supposed to speculate, but it’s worth considering.

Second, the proceeds are split 50/50 with the State, and there’s a three-year review period. After that, a report is submitted to the committee of jurisdiction; and, if needed, a law can be passed to adjust things appropriately. The hope is that with a \$4 ticket, a 50/50 revenue split, and a three-year report-back, this creates an opportunity to try something new without requiring a fiscal note.

Third, anecdotally, many people like this idea and say they'd play this ticket even though they don't usually play scratch-offs. Why? Because everyone hates ticks! The 15-cent fee was admittedly a tax. This, however, is strictly voluntary—play or don't play. The funds would go toward lab operations as needed.

So, let's give it a trial and see what happens. Thank you for your time and consideration.