



STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
23 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, ME 04333-0023

JANET T. MILLS  
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COMMISSIONER

May 8, 2025

Senator Rafferty, Senate Chair  
Representative Murphy, House Chair  
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and Distinguished Members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee:

LD 1858, An Act to Promote Seafood to Local Schools, would create the Local Seafood Fund, which would be used to match \$1 for every \$3 a school administrative unit (SAU) pays for seafood purchased directly from a commercial fisherman or cooperative, an aquaculture farmer or cooperative, or a local food hub, processor, or distributor in Maine.

The Maine Department of Education (DOE) is in support of SAUs utilizing local food in their School Nutrition Programs. In fact, SAUs are already able to purchase local seafood through the Local Foods Fund, as described in Title 20-A §6602 (12). Many SAUs obtain seafood for free through the Maine Coast Fisherman's Program. There are numerous programs that support providing local seafood to Maine's students, including Maine Fish in Maine Schools, and Maine Farms and Sea to School. For this bill to have its greatest impact, there would need to be significant coordination between these numerous initiatives to most effectively serve Maine's SAUs.

For more information on these programs, the DOE's website is a useful resource:

- Local Foods Fund:  
<https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/nutrition/programs/localfoods/producefund>
- Farm and Sea to School:  
<https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/nutrition/programs/farmtoschool>

The Department will be available to provide additional information on LD 1858 and respond to any questions during the upcoming work session.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
*Jane McLucas*  
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Jane McLucas  
Director of Child Nutrition