



TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF
LD 1838 An Act to Provide Opportunities and Sustainable Revenue for Maine Farms,
Agricultural Fairs, Wabanaki Tribes and Veterans' Homes

Senator Hickman, Representative Supica, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. My name is Julie Ann Smith, and I am speaking on behalf of the Maine Farmers Coalition. We are a grassroots alliance of progressive farmers, focused on promoting sustainable growth and safeguarding the future of Maine's vital farming industry. Our mission is to ensure that our agricultural practices protect the rich resources and heritage of our beautiful state.

We offer our strong support for LD 1838, a bill that offers a rare and much-needed opportunity to invest in the long-term health of Maine farms, agricultural infrastructure, and the communities we serve.

A central feature of this bill is its 10-year funding commitment to the Dairy Tier Program—a lifeline for Maine's dairy farms. This program ensures that dairy producers can survive in the face of unstable milk prices and rising production costs. Securing a full decade of stable support will provide these farms with the confidence and capital needed to make long-term improvements, hire workers, and plan for the next generation. It's the kind of forward-looking policy Maine agriculture desperately needs.

LD 1838 also supports the equine industry, which is integral to our rural economy. Maine's horse farms, breeders, feed producers, and track workers are part of a living tradition that connects deeply to the farming community. Every dollar invested in horse racing ripples across feed mills, veterinary clinics, hay farms, and equipment suppliers. This bill helps sustain that entire rural network.

Moreover, the revenue generated through charitable gaming will benefit agricultural fairs, which play a vital role in connecting farms to the public, supporting youth education in agriculture, and stimulating local economies. These fairs are not just heritage events—they are platforms for farm sales, ag tourism, and farmer-consumer engagement.



Additionally, we deeply support the recognition of the Wabanaki Tribes and veterans' homes in this bill. It reflects a more just and inclusive model of economic development, one that serves all Mainers, especially those who have long been underserved.

By tying gaming revenue to these rural priorities, LD 1838 creates a sustainable, recurring stream of funding that goes directly into the agricultural backbone of our state. It provides the kind of structural support that grants and emergency relief programs simply cannot. It creates a long-term mechanism to reinvest in Maine agriculture that will allow farms to modernize infrastructure, invest in conservation practices, and plan for future generations.

LD 1838 is a strategic investment in Maine's agricultural future. We urge the committee to vote **Ought to Pass** and help secure the stability, innovation, and resilience that Maine farms need to thrive in the decades to come.

Thank you for your time and for your continued support of Maine's farmers.

