



Maine Potato Board  
744 Main Street  
Presque Isle, ME 04769  
(207) 769-5061  
FAX 764-4148  
mainepotatoes.com

**Testimony of Jeannie M. Tapley, Executive Director,  
Maine Potato Board to the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation**

**May 16, 2025**

**LD 1951: An Act to Promote Food Processing and Manufacturing Facility  
Expansion and Create Jobs**

Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier and esteemed members of the Taxation Committee; I am Jeannie Tapley, Executive Director for the Maine Potato Board (MPB) and I am here today in strong support of LD 1951: An Act to Promote Food Processing and Manufacturing Facility Expansion and Create Jobs.

The Maine Potato Board (MPB) represents all of Maine's potato growers, processors and dealers. The Maine potato industry is a vital part of Maine's economy with an economic impact of \$1.3 billion annually. The Maine potato industry currently harvests approximately 54,000 acres of potatoes with 90% of that acreage being grown in Aroostook County and rural communities. While that acreage has been stable over the past decade, there is opportunity for growth and farmland being reclaimed back into productions if there is demand. We fully support LD 1951 because if passed it will assist with that growth and demand.

There was a bill (LD 1586) passed in the 129<sup>th</sup> Legislature that started this effort and we are very appreciative as it has been beneficial to the expansion of processing efforts in Aroostook County. The bill before you now, LD 1951, builds on that initial effort and allows for further expansion and infrastructure.

Maine has the opportunity to expand markets of agricultural products; consumers are looking for quality products and Maine has a reputation for providing just that - high quality product. In order for Maine producers to be successful in expanding markets, we need to add value to the products here in Maine. The largest sector of our industry is the processing sector that utilizes over 70% of all potatoes harvested. At this time the processing sector sends a large amount of raw product out of the state to be processed elsewhere and that is not in the long-term best interest for Maine and its producers. We need more infrastructure here to keep that additional economic impact in State.

LD 1951 will create more value-added capacity for Maine agricultural products, a key element to growing Maine's agricultural sector, and presents the opportunity to incentivize food processing facilities in rural areas of our state. Passing of this bill will have a major positive impact on our local communities with creating jobs, increasing the tax base, and for the potato industry, increasing acreage and market opportunities.

I ask that you please support LD 1951 and help grow the infrastructure and capacity for local food production and improve opportunities for our local economies and workforce. Thank you for your time; I am happy to answer any questions and will be available at the work session to provide any additional information necessary.