

Testimony in Support of LD 1951

An Act to Promote Food Processing and Manufacturing Facility Expansion and Create Jobs
Submitted to the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation – May 16, 2025

Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation,

My name is Donna Turner, and I am the Town Manager of Washburn. I am here today to express my strong support for LD 1951 and to share how the development of a potato processing facility has revitalized our small town.

Six years ago, I stood in a room like this and testified in support of LD 1586 on behalf of the McCrum Family, with the hope that they would build a state-of-the-art potato processing facility in Washburn. At the time, our town—population just under 1,700—was struggling. Our main street was lined with real estate signs. We were losing population. Our high school and recreation department were at risk of closing. We had one of the highest, if not *the* highest, property tax (mil) rates in the entire state. To put it plainly, we were a sinking ship.

Today, everything has changed.

The McCrum Family *did* build that facility, and what it has done for Washburn is nothing short of remarkable. Now, there are only one or two homes for sale at any given time. Our tax mil rate has stabilized and is now comparable to some of the more prosperous towns in the state.

The growth we had only dreamed about is now our reality. This project brought good-paying, family-sustaining jobs to Washburn—jobs that have attracted new families to our

community. Families with children for our schools. Families building new homes, shopping in our stores, fueling up at our gas stations, and eating at the local diner.

The McCrum Family has also been very generous to the Town, in supporting the many different organizations that we have. The Rotary Club, Our Veteran's Memorial Park, the ATV/Snowmobile clubs, to name a few. They came into town wanting to be a "good neighbor" and our town welcomed them with open arms. This has only proved to make our Town stronger and a better place to live.

This development has also been a tremendous boost for our County's farmers. I firmly believe that when our farmers thrive, the entire County thrives—and when our County thrives, the whole state benefits.

I support LD 1951 because it will amend the existing tax credit to further support the investments of the McCrum Family and the Sargent Family. These companies need these tax credits to continue creating jobs and supporting communities like ours. I truly believe that if you give, you will get back twice as much. Anything we can do to help them will, in turn, help all of our towns.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,
Donna Turner
Town Manager, Washburn, Maine