

January 20, 2026

Appropriations and Financials Affairs Committee

Re: LD 2094

Good after noon Senator Rotundo, Representative Gatine and all honorable members of this committee.

My name is Barry Higgins. I am here representing Maple Lane Farms from Charleston. We are a 5 generation agricultural producer farming about 1800 acres in central Penobscot county.

Today we milk about 100 dairy cattle and ship milk to Oakhurst Dairy. We also have a commercial feed lot and have around 800 beef cattle on feed. Between beef and dairy, we feed nearly 1000 head every day.

In 2006 we built a new slaughter and processing facility and have been in a constant growth mode ever since.

We are a fully inspected facility. We currently are the largest C/P inspected facility in the state. We process our own animals and do custom and private labeling for numerous farms throughout the state.

We are a very diversified farm. Over 600 of our own beef was processed in 2025. We also sell extra silage and hay to many farms within an 80 mile radius.

We employ around 35 people on a year around basis with a 1.5 million dollar annual payroll.

This proposal in my estimation would be a good start to repair Maines' rural economy. I drive around rural Maine and see old farm buildings, houses, barns, sheds etc. falling down in dis repair, mills closing, factory retro fitted for low income or elderly housing. Nothing is worse than seeing productive farm land in golden rod, alders and weeds.

Maine cannot continue to lean on cities and urban areas to support the rural and wildness areas of the state to support a vibrant economy

I am not expert on the forestry part of the bond and would defer comments on this part to the people who specialize in that industry but on the agricultural side of this bond this would be a start to heal the rural economy.

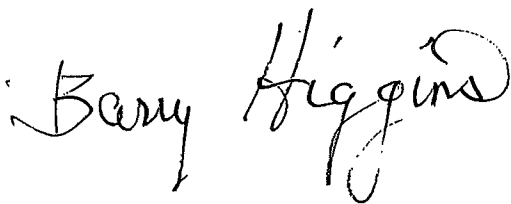
I have thought for many years that Maine has overlooked the vast possibilities that rural Maine has. No where in the Northeast do we have the vast agricultural and forest land. We have millions of customers in the greater Boston region who are begging for local produced food and fiber.

We have our own gold mine right in our back yard that needs to be mined but time is of the essence. As I see open space growing to golden rod and alders, we need to get this acreage put back into production. Producing food, feed and fiber, which in turn produces jobs, income and a vibrant economy..

I believe this would possibly be the spark to ignite Maines Rural Economy.

If I had more time, I could explain to you how with some changes in rural taxation and investment could help us mimic some of the stronger agriculture states up and down the eastern U.S.! example Penn., Carolinas and Florida

Thank you for your time

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barry Higgins". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Barry Higgins

Maple Lane Farms

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