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*Testimony of Rep. Christina Mitchell introducing
LD 2096, An Act Regarding Scheduling of Agricultural Fairs and Pulling
Events
Before the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee*

Good afternoon, Senator Talbot-Ross, Representative Pluecker and distinguished members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee. I am Christina Mitchell, and I represent the communities of Cumberland, Long Island and Chebeague Island. I am here today to introduce **LD 2096, An Act to Regarding Scheduling of Agricultural Fairs and Pulling Events.**

The intent of LD 2096 is to address the concerns that arose with the fair dates last season between two fairs. With this bill, I want to prevent what happened from recurring and from spreading to other fairs, especially smaller ones where the damage would be more harmful. I have an amendment to offer as well that focuses on this intent and does not go deep into definition changes of an agricultural fair.

The situation that calls for the bill: the final day of any given fair in Maine is universally the largest revenue-producing day. If a fair, as occurred last season, unilaterally steps into another fair's approved, licensed final dates, it causes financial, organizational and public confusion. Fairs already operate on a very thin margin; to lose revenue from ticket sales, vendors and events is damaging to any fair in Maine. In our situation, it was confusing to the vendors and the public, as well as disruptive to the participants in the exhibits, competitions and show events.

The solution: this bill provides the Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry with tools to address any deviations from operating an agricultural fair outside its approved, licensed fair dates. Specifically, the bill provides that the Commissioner may suspend or revoke the license of a licensee that is in violation of the provisions in the bill. The bill also provides that a scheduled public or private pulling event must take place during the dates of the fair's license and specifies that a pulling event that is not conducted in accordance with this provision is not entitled to a stipend.

There are fair officials present that can speak directly to the impact of the fair date overlap last fair season. I understand that many fairs beyond the one in my district are very concerned about

facing a similar situation. This bill provides the Commissioner of ACF the tools and authority needed to address and prevent such an occurrence from happening again.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions, but I would defer specifics to the fair officials who are with us today.