



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Rep. Nathan Wadsworth on

LD 2096, "An Act Regarding Scheduling of Agricultural Fairs and Pulling Events"

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

January 27, 2026

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Committee:

My name is Nathan Wadsworth, representing House District 82. I rise today in strong opposition to this legislation.

I am a lifelong farmer who has shown cattle at nearly every major fair in our region from Cumberland to Fryeburg to Oxford, Windsor, and Acton. I also show at my home fair of Ossipee Valley in Hiram. The message from the ground is clear: this bill is potentially devastating to our fairs.

I oppose this bill for three reasons:

This bill represents a significant and unwarranted expansion of government control over local institutions. By granting the Department the power to penalize a fairground for hosting "largely similar" activities within a week of their assigned dates, the state is effectively micro-managing community calendars. Ultimately, the government should not be in the business of dictating the "similarity" of local events or punishing organizations for maximizing the use of their own grounds.

Why is this bill an "Emergency bill?" This is the second session, reserved for true emergencies. I think that you would agree that changing the definition of a pulling event or a fair date is not "immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, and safety." There is no crisis here that justifies bypassing the standard legislative process.

By narrowing the definition of an "agricultural fair," we risk leaving behind cherished community institutions like the Waterford World's Fair. We should be expanding support for local agriculture, not creating rigid definitions that pick winners and losers among our historic societies. Excluding these smaller fairs will have a negative impact on their local communities.

I want you to ask yourselves, "Why is this bill NOT being brought forward by the Maine Association of Agricultural Fairs or the Department of ACF themselves?"

I urge the committee to protect our rural traditions and vote Ought Not to Pass.

Sincerely,

Nathan Wadsworth
State Representative