

Noami Brautigam  
Monroe

Dear Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, Speaker of the House Ryan Fecteau, and President of the Senate Troy Jackson,

I join you all today in support of LD 437 “An Act to Establish the Maine Healthy Soils Program.”

Farming has always been challenging. And we, as farmers, continue to witness the climate crisis exacerbating these challenges as weather is becoming less predictable and more severe. Nationally, my peers and I are more and more often farming through floods, droughts, wildfires, hurricanes, hailstorms and other extreme weather. In Maine, we all just farmed through our hottest summer on record. Last fall more than 80% of our state was experiencing severe to extreme drought conditions.

My partner and I own and operate a diversified farm in Waldo County. Here at our farm, not only are we trying to adapt to increasingly unpredictable and often severe weather, but each season we find ourselves up against new unanticipated challenges. During last summer’s drought we ran our irrigation 24/7, but found it was not enough. While we are preparing to drill a second well, we are acutely aware that drilling more wells and other reactionary responses to the climate crisis are costly endeavors and ultimately unsustainable both economically and ecologically. In tandem with well drilling, we are also working to increase organic matter in our soils to increase its water holding capacity, building our farm’s drought resiliency.

We want to continue to be able to feed our community. And, the burden of climate change adaptation and building business resiliency to survive the climate crisis should not be on farmers alone. We are just beginning to understand the ways in which building healthy soils through methods both practiced and proven by Indigenous people around the world such as reduced tillage, rotational grazing and cover cropping can both prepare us for extreme weather events and help mitigate the impacts of climate change through carbon sequestration. But we, like many farms, need support to implement these adaptations in a meaningful way. We are appreciative of LD 437, which prioritizes both financial and technical support for something as foundational to farming during this climate crisis as building healthy soils.

We urge you to vote in support of LD 437.

Noami Brautigam  
Dickey Hill Farm  
Monroe, Maine  
207-450-9510