

Philip Mathieu  
Saco

Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil, and members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry:

My name is Philip Mathieu. I am a young conservation professional currently living in Saco, ME. I am writing today to encourage you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 437.

I am a "returner," having spent part of my childhood and all of my college years in other parts of New England. I moved back to Maine to pursue a career in the environmental field. This was a very intentional decision. Maine is a leader for forward-thinking programs, both in the governmental and non-profit spheres, that promote sensible pathways to a more sustainable future for our state, our country, and our world.

This program continues in that tradition by establishing an entity within the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry that would promote soil health initiatives at no immediate cost to the taxpayer. This program would direct knowledge and resources on healthy soils to our farmers, positioning them to both improve their practices where needed and to better compete for healthy soil-related funding opportunities. Acting now, while healthy soils are a relatively new initiative on the national scale, ensures that Maine farmers will be well positioned to take advantage of future funding opportunities, be they from the federal government or otherwise.

LD 437 represents a rare opportunity to enhance our state-level programs at no cost to the taxpayer. I urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 437.

Sincerely,  
Philip Mathieu  
Saco, ME (right on the Buxton border)