



March 3, 2021

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 write today on behalf of the Maine Organic Milk Producers in support of L.D. 437 “An Act to Establish the Maine Healthy Soils Program,” which would create a program within the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to promote and expand the use of healthy soils practices among farmers. The Maine Organic Milk Producers is a state-wide membership based non-profit made up of the certified organic cow dairies in Maine.

Healthy soils practices play a crucial role in our farms’ organic systems of management, and ultimately offer a realistic strategy for combating the effects of climate change. A better understanding of processes and management of our soils will help to make all Maine farmers more resilient to the impacts of our changing climate. We have only begun to understand the importance healthy soil carries in our fight against climate change, and the Healthy Soils Program would provide Maine farmers with an up-front, first- hand opportunity to be part of the solution, by providing access to research, funding and opportunities to work towards better soil management and healthier soils.

We urge you to support this legislation as a way to value our state’s precious agricultural soils and to value the farmers who care for it.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Annie Watson', written in a cursive style.

Annie Watson

President, Maine Organic Milk Producers