



Testimony in support of LD 691, An Act To Support Farms and Address Food Insecurity

March 25, 2021

To Senator Dill, Representative O’Neil and the members of the Joint Standing Committee On Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry,

My name is Amy Gallant and I am the Vice President of Public Policy and Research for Good Shepherd Food Bank of Maine. We have a network of more than 500 partner agencies, supporting our mission to eliminate hunger in Maine by improving access to nutritious food for people in need, building strong community partnerships, and mobilizing the public in the fight to end hunger. Last year, through our network, we distributed 27 million meals across the entire state.

Eighty-one percent of the food distributed by Good Shepherd Food Bank last year was nutritious, or what we call “food to encourage healthy eating.” We work with farmers and food producers to provide fresh, local food to our network of partners. When there is fresh produce in a food pantry, it is the first to go. In 2020, over 10 million pounds of produce were distributed to Mainers in need through the statewide network of pantry partners. Two million pounds of fresh produce were from Maine farmers, a 25-percent increase from 2019.

The fund established by LD 691 will provide support to federal food and nutrition assistance program participants for the purchase of locally grown fruits and vegetables. Such a fund could match incentives provided by federal programs, such as USDA’s Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive (FINI) program. FINI supports projects to increase the purchase of fruits and vegetables among low-income consumers participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) by providing incentives at the point of purchase. In Maine, FINI is currently being used to double the purchasing power of SNAP recipients for purchasing local foods at farmers markets and co-ops.

We urge you to support this bill, and thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Amy Gallant  
Good Shepherd Food Bank  
Vice President of Public Policy & Research

PARTNERING TO END HUNGER



Good Shepherd

FOOD BANK OF MAINE

