

Testimony March 30, 2021 on LD 954 and LD 574 of Hendrik D. Gideonse, 119 Old County Road, Brooklin, ME 04616 207-359-8510 gideonse@midmaine.com

Chairman Dill, Representative O'Neil, members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, I am Hendrik Gideonse of Brooklin, ME testifying for myself on behalf of LD 954 and LD 574.

The membership of this committee has changed greatly over the years that have elapsed since I first appeared on behalf of food sovereignty proposals, local farms, and the right to food. This marks my ninth year working both locally and in Augusta to further the aspirations of those who would enhance, expand and protect the bonds between local farms (producers) and their customers.

When I first appeared before you almost a decades ago the municipalities adopting local food ordinances could be counted on the fingers of two hands. Now our number is well over eighty. State statutes have recognized this expression of home rule authority, and the ensuing substantial growth in participating municipalities has been both gratifying and important.

The two bills before you seek to expand to plantations and unorganized territories the opportunity currently available to municipalities and to clarify statutory understanding of permissible interactions between local farmers and their customers.

LD 954 would allow County governments with plantations or unorganized territory to function in the same manner as municipalities respecting Local Food Ordinances. I urge you to adopt the proposals. However, I would note that in line 6 six words are struck that should be restored lest reason be given to jeopardize the meat inspection authority Maine currently bears as part of Federal food safety responsibilities. A special session of the legislature was required to assure that outcome, and should not be undercut by the noted deletion.

LD 574 represents an improvement of understanding of permissible transactions, to recognize that on-site transactions at local farms can be supplemented by delivery capabilities to homes or off-site farmer's markets or other mutually agreeable arrangements between producers and consumers.

Thanks for the opportunity to testify on these two bills.