

I strongly support this resolution and am grateful to Rep. Pluecker for introducing it. Any objective examination of our state's history amply supports the urgent need for this important resolution. As Representative Talbot-Ross, Senator Hlickman, and others pointed out in their testimonies supporting the resolution, Maine did not become the whitest state in the nation simply by accident, but rather as a result of systemic policies over many years which have excluded African-American and Indigenous farmers from access to land, grants and financing in our state and our nation. Farming is indeed hard, but it's certainly harder for Mainers of color and other under-represented groups who have historically been excluded from access to land, grants and financing. This resolution to study the impact of past policies on these groups as regards farming is much-needed, so that we don't continue to perpetuate exclusionary policies moving forward, to help to begin to level the playing field for all Mainers who wish to engage in agriculture in our state.