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STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY  
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AMANDA E. BEAL  
COMMISSIONER

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,  
CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

IN SUPPORT OF LD 870

*RESOLUTION, Directing the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations To Study the Impact of Policies Regarding Agriculture, Access to Land, Access to Grants and Access to Financing on African-American and Indigenous Farmers in the State*

April 1, 2021

Senator Dill, Representative O’Neil, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, my name is Nancy McBrady, Director of the Bureau of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Resources in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry. I am speaking on behalf of the Department in favor of LD 870, a “*RESOLUTION, Directing the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous and Maine Tribal Populations To Study the Impact of Policies Regarding Agriculture, Access to Land, Access to Grants and Access to Financing on African-American and Indigenous Farmers in the State.*”

The Department and the Bureau play a pivotal role in Maine agriculture—as a regulator, technical assistance provider, grant-maker, financing conduit, and more. We view farming as a noble endeavor. We want Maine farmers—all Maine farmers—to succeed. And we are committed to the equitable administration of our programs and functions.

We recognize that there are areas of improvement to be realized across the Department to serve better the people and communities highlighted explicitly in this bill. We welcome the opportunity to improve upon our policies and programs. We are open to addressing ways in which the Department can strengthen our outreach and communications to ensure more availability and access to our programs for underserved people and communities.

Additionally, we recognize the value of listening to voices across the agricultural community, specifically those previously impacted by policies regarding agriculture and land access that have not benefited all of Maine’s people equally. The Department would be happy to be part of these conversations as they continue and to serve as a resource as needed and appropriate. We would also welcome any and all data and/or feedback that can assist us in our goal to continuously improve access to, and the impact of, our programs.



Thank you, and I'm happy to answer any questions.