

Stephen DeGoosh
Sangerville

Testimony on LD-954 and LD-574.

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Chairman Dill and members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, We are Steve DeGoosh and Brooke Isham, of Iomah Farmstead, located in Sangerville, testifying for ourselves on behalf of LD 954 and LD 574.

We strongly support Food Sovereignty—it is actually one of the major reasons we moved to Maine several years ago after seeing a couple of our close friends almost lose their farms/livelihood/way of life due to government overreach in regards to their farms. We were following the movement for years before we moved here from Michigan. We have since invested a tremendous amount of energy and finances into developing our Farmstead, and taking our place in the growing local food network in the central Maine highlands. We are very lucky to live in a strong "home rule" state, and grateful that our state government backs up those towns that have adopted the LFCSGO.

Other states are following our lead. How fitting for the "Dirigo State"!

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. We urge you to adopt the proposals. However, we would note that Section 285 has been struck from the MFSA—it should be restored to not 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.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify on these two bills. Thank you.