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Rep. Billy Bob Faulkingham
Testimony in Support of

LD 954 An Act To Provide Equal Access to the Benefits of the Maine Food Sovereignty Act

Good morning Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil, and members of the Committee On Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. I am Representative Billy Bob Faulkingham and I am here to speak in support of **LD 954 An Act To Provide Equal Access to the Benefits of the Maine Food Sovereignty Act**.

This bill includes plantations and unorganized territories under the municipal home rule authority and compliance provisions of the Maine Food Sovereignty Act. This bill also authorizes plantations to enact ordinances under the Maine Food Sovereignty Act and directs counties to provide for the unorganized territories the services under the Act that municipalities provide.

This bill corrects an oversight in the original bill that left out citizens who live in unorganized townships. Obviously when this bill was passed it was intended to retain home rule authority, but was never intended to not grant that authority to unorganized townships and plantations.

In my opinion this bill should go one step further, and automatically include any unorganized territories or plantations into the Food Sovereignty Act through a state ordinance. The reason I believe these territories should be automatically enrolled in the ordinance is that because the definition of the unorganized territory (UT) of Maine is "that area of Maine having no local, incorporated municipal government." This will make it difficult for any citizens in an unorganized territory to participate in the Food Sovereignty Act. The UT land area is slightly over one half the area of the entire State of Maine. Year round residents number approximately 9,000, with many more people seasonally residing in the UT.

I hope the committee will give this bill a unanimous OTP report, and give consideration to adding an amendment that automatically enrolls all the UT's into the Food Sovereignty Act ordinance.

Thank you for your consideration. I will answer any questions you may have.

Respectfully,
Representative Billy Bob Faulkingham