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

April 6, 2021

Chair Dill, Chair O'Brien, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, my name is Stephen Gorden and in addition to serving as chair of the board of commissioners for Cumberland County, I am writing today in my role as board president of the Maine County Commissioners Association. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony to the Committee in support of LD 954.

About MCCA. Briefly, the Maine County Commissioners Association was established in 1890 to assist Maine's county government in providing vital services to Maine citizens in a responsive, efficient, and credible manner. The Association is based in Augusta and currently represents 15 of Maine's 16 counties and is governed by a board with representation from each participating county.

Our position on LD 954. Maine's 2017 "Food Sovereignty Act" (7-A MRSA §201-B) gave municipalities the ability to regulate direct "producer-to-consumer" food purchases in their jurisdictions by drafting ordinances covering such purchases. As we understand this legislation, it would give county government the same authority to enact local "producer to consumer" ordinances with regard to any Unorganized Territory within the county for which the commissioners serve as the local governing authority. We believe this is a prudent clarification to the law to ensure that the unorganized territories are not otherwise excluded from the ability to participate in the opportunities established under the Food Sovereignty Act.

Conclusion. We hope this information is helpful to the Committee as it considers LD 954, and we hope the Committee will see fit to give this bill an "ought to pass" report.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Gorden".

Stephen Gorden
President

cc: Commissioner Brian Hobart, Chair, MCCA Legislative Committee
James I. Cohen, Verrill Dana, LLP, MCCA Legislative Counsel