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Judiciary Committee
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Testimony of Senator Lisa Keim before the Joint Standing Committee on
Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

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 Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. I am Lisa Keim, and I proudly represent the citizens of Senate District 18, which includes much of Northern Oxford County and two communities in Androscoggin County. I am here today to introduce LD 954, “An Act To Provide Equal Access to the Benefits of the Maine Food Sovereignty Act.”

Maine’s Food Sovereignty Act took effect in 2017, allowing direct producer-to-consumer sale of food with less state oversight. In towns that have declared food sovereignty, it is now easier for neighbors to buy and sell to one another, and the local foods community is flourishing. The legislation that passed in 2017 inadvertently left out plantations and unorganized territories under the municipal home rule authority and compliance provisions of the Maine Food Sovereignty Act. This legislation rectifies that oversight, while proposing no further amendments to the existing Act. Maine law should be applied equally for all residents.

Dan Davis, who has provided written testimony in support of this legislation, asked that I bring this bill forward. In his testimony he points out that 11,300+ residents of Unorganized Territories and Plantations have been left out of the Maine Food Sovereignty Act, and makes a further point regarding the increased vulnerability of these same rural Maine residents to food supply chain disruptions. Expanding access to the Maine Food Sovereignty Act may help to alleviate those pressures and will increase access to locally grown, fresh food.

Thank you for your consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.