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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

Neither For Nor Against LD 1159

LD 1159, An Act To Amend the Membership Requirements of the Board of Pesticides Control

April 13, 2021

Senator Dill, Representative O’Neil, and members of the Committee, I am Ann Gibbs, the Director of the Animal and Plant Health Division within the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. I am here today to speak Neither For Nor Against LD 1159, “*An Act To Amend the Membership Requirements of the Board of Pesticides Control.*”

The Board of Pesticides Control (BPC) is Maine's lead agency for pesticide oversight, whose responsibilities include protecting public and environmental health. The Board is further charged with finding ways to minimize reliance on pesticides through the promotion of Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and other science-based strategies for controlling pests. The Board’s area of oversight and stewardship—pesticide distribution and use—has remained the same since the Board was established in 1965. However, demand for these services has steadily increased.

The current public Board is comprised of seven public members appointed by the Governor to serve four-year terms. Day-to-day activities are carried out by a staff of ten full-time and four seasonal employees who are housed in the Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources, Division of Animal and Plant Health.

LD 1159 proposes to require that two public members of the Board have a demonstrated interest in environmental protection and represent different geographic areas of the State. This language is essentially the same language that existed in statute for the BPC’s public members prior to 2011. Because the Board functioned successfully and capably utilizing that previous definition – just as it also functions successfully and capably today under the current definition – we do not foresee a concern with reverting to the prior definition. An interest in environmental protection is certainly relevant to effective service on the Board of Pesticides Control.

I will be happy to answer any of your questions at this time and will be present at the work session for further discussion as needed.

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