



Good Shepherd Food Bank testimony in support of LD 1565, An Act to Strengthen Maine's Agriculture, Food, and Forest Economy

May 4, 2021

Good morning Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil, and members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry,

My name is Amy Gallant, and I am the Vice President of Public Policy & Research for Good Shepherd Food Bank. The Food Bank has a bold goal that 2025, all food-insecure Mainers will have access to the nutritious food they need, when and where they need it. In doing so, we will help stabilize the lives of the people we serve, reduce the economic costs of hunger in our state, and make Maine a stronger, more resilient place to work and live.

In order to achieve this bold goal, the Food Bank must identify new and additional sources of food. LD 1565 will increase investment in Maine Agriculture, Food and Forest Products industries so that producers, processors, and other food businesses can anticipate and access new markets and opportunities. The Maine Agriculture, Food and Forest Products Investment Fund will facilitate strategic investments in the state's agricultural, food and forest products processing and manufacturing industries, filling a gap in needed capital that does not currently exist in Maine.

By supporting growth and innovation in critical infrastructure businesses, this bill will direct DACF and DECD to establish a statewide system for benchmarking progress toward identified needs in order to grow Maine's food system. This roadmap will absolutely assist the Food Bank in sourcing food to provide to Mainers experiencing food insecurity.

We urge you to support LD 1565. Thank you for your consideration of my testimony. I am happy to take questions.

Sincerely,

Amy Gallant
Vice President of Public Policy & Research
Good Shepherd Food Bank