



# *Wild Blueberry Commission* OF MAINE

5784 York Complex, Suite 52, Orono, Maine 04469-5784

TEL: 207-581-1475  
FAX: 207-581-3499

**Eric Venturini, Executive Director**

**Testimony opposed of LD 1599**

**An Act To Establish A Maine Pesticide Sales and Use Registry**

Senator Dill, Representative O'Neil, and esteemed members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, my name is Eric Venturini and I am the Executive Director of the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine, the voice of Maine's wild blueberry farms and businesses.

In 2009, in the First Regular Session of the 124<sup>th</sup> Legislature, Representative Seth Berry introduced LD 1293, *An Act To Require Citizen Notification of Pesticide Applications Using Aerial Spray or Air-carrier Application Equipment*, which requires land managers to notify neighbors prior to the application of pesticides. It set in place a Board of Pesticides Control established and managed registry of citizens who want to know when pesticides are applied within a certain distance of land owned, leased, or resided on by those persons.

This bill was revisited in the Second Regular Session of the 124<sup>th</sup> through LD 1547, *An Act To Revise Notification Requirements for Pesticides Applications Using Aircraft or Air-carrier Equipment*. The changes made it easier for landowners to provide the information to those on the registry, and in a less onerous manner. When you consider that farmers often work 80 hours a week during the growing season, the idea of additional paperwork is not welcome, and these changes were needed. There was a strong bipartisan vote in this committee to keep the registry in statute with the sensible changes presented to make it much less onerous.

I recount this brief history to ensure that this committee is aware that an effective pesticide notification registry already exists. If a person wants to be notified about applications, they sign up on the list, and they are notified. By keeping the registry "opt in," it minimizes the burden on our farmers, and yet allows those interested to be made aware of applications. This system has worked well because it provides appropriate notice to neighbors and promotes good communication between farmers and their neighbors.

LD 1599, however, is unnecessary and imposes a real burden for farmers. These farmers spend their days during the growing season in the field, not in the office. This bill asks that for each application, an applicator submits to the board within 7 days, a report that includes their name, certification number, company name, their contact information and address, date and time, brand name and active ingredient, quantity used, description of application equipment, location of application, and purpose. In addition, it appears that applicators using Integrated Pest Management would have to submit a report to the Board of Pesticides Control justifying applications.

This bill proposes putting this information online, information which includes the name, address, phone number, and email address of each pesticide applicator. That is a breach of privacy. Without a doubt this will result in the harassment of pesticide applicators by certain members of the public. I repeat, I am



## *Wild Blueberry Commission* OF MAINE

5784 York Complex, Suite 52, Orono, Maine 04469-5784

TEL: 207-581-1475

FAX: 207-581-3499

quite confident that this will result in the harassment of pesticide applicators by certain members of the public. I do not believe that was the intent of this bill.

Wild blueberry farmers understand and appreciate the goal of decreasing pesticide use. That is a goal that we can all agree with. However, this bill simply makes it harder to be a farmer in Maine, will result in the harassment of pesticide applicators, and will not decrease pesticide use.

On behalf of Maine's wild blueberry farms and businesses, I urge this Committee to vote Ought Not To Pass and I would be happy to take any questions that you may have.