

Molly DellaRoman
5 Star Nursery and Orchard
LD 568

Testimony of Molly DellaRoman of Brooklin before the 131st Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Dear Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry,

My name is Molly DellaRoman, I am a farmer in Brooklin and I am supplying written testimony today as the co-owner and operator of a MOFGA-certified organic orchard with my partner, Timothy Skillin. We are expressing support of LD 568 - An Act to Provide Funding for the Fund to Address Food Insecurity and Provide Nutrition Incentives.

We first became involved with a farmers market that was setup to accept SNAP, Maine Harvest Bucks and Farm Fresh Rewards at the Rockland Farmers Market in 2021. This was our first market experience where these vital services were available and realized very quickly what an inclusive and more robust market experience it was for all community members. There were multiple market days that Maine Harvest Bucks provided 50% of our sales (kids love fruit!!). It's not hard at all to understand how this program not only makes our entire community more healthy but is a tremendous support to local farmers and therefore our local economy. This year, another one of our farmers markets, Blue Hill, started accepting SNAP/EBT and Maine Harvest Bucks and the same results that we witnessed in Rockland began to develop in Blue Hill. With continuous funding of \$600,000/year, markets like the Blue Hill Farmers Market can provide seamless growing of the program, reaching more of our community members.

It is incredibly rewarding to see local, organic food be available to all, while seeing the business base for local farms grow. It doesn't get any better than knowing your neighbors are being taken care of while growing a strong, local food system. We urge you to give your full support to LD 568.

Thank you,
Molly DellaRoman and Timothy Skillin