

Written Testimony in Support of LD 1274
Land Access for Historically Disadvantaged Farmers
For the Maine Legislature's Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee
9am April 3, 2023 in Cross Building Room 214

Dear Members of the Committee,

As the Director of Social and Environmental Impact at Dirigo Collective, a Maine-based certified B Corp, I am writing to express our strong support for Maine Bill LD 1274, which seeks to provide land access to historically disadvantaged farmers. As a socially and environmentally responsible company, we believe it is our duty to create pathways for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) folks to access land from which we have historically prevented them from acquiring.

This bill is crucial because it recognizes the systemic inequities that exist in our society and aims to address them in a meaningful way. It is a step towards creating a more equitable and just food system, one that is inclusive of all people, regardless of their race or ethnicity.

At Dirigo Collective, we understand the importance of land access for small-scale farmers. It is a key factor in building a sustainable and regenerative food system. However, we also recognize that many BIPOC farmers have been historically excluded from land ownership due to discriminatory laws, practices, or economic barriers. This has resulted in a lack of representation in the agricultural sector, and it is our responsibility to change that.

Maine Bill LD 1274 seeks to address these historical inequities by creating a program that provides land access to BIPOC farmers. By doing so, it will help to level the playing field and provide opportunities for these farmers to succeed. This is not only important from a social justice perspective, it also makes economic sense. A diverse and inclusive agricultural sector is critical to Maine's economy, and supporting BIPOC farmers will only enhance this.

As a certified B Corp, we are committed to using business as a force for good. We believe that the private sector has a crucial role to play in advancing social and environmental justice, and supporting Maine Bill LD 1274 is one way we can do this. By providing land access to historically disadvantaged farmers, we can help to build a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable food system for all Maine residents.

In conclusion, I urge the Committee to support Maine Bill LD 1274. By doing so, we can help to create a more just and equitable food system that benefits everyone in Maine. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Benn Marine he/him/his
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