

## **LD 1612**

### **An Act to Address Food Insecurity and Support Local Agriculture**

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Senator Ingwarsen, Representative Pluceker, and members of the committee I am Penny Jordan, I am one of the owners of Jordan's Farm a mixed vegetable farm in Cape Elizabeth and I am here to testify in favor of LD1612. I present this position because I believe this bill will play a significant role in addressing food insecurity across the state and will leverage products from Maine farms in doing so.

I have worked with Preble Street Resource Center for almost 20 years supplying produce from my farm and over the past few years I have incorporated additional six farms. I partner with Preble Street because of the number of people they reach and thus the impact my efforts will have. Completing the buildout of the Food Security Hub will have an even greater impact.

I remember the day Joe Conroy from Preble Street contacted me to see if I wanted a tour of their new building – the building that would become the Food Security Hub – we talked about the impact this facility would have. And I asked, “will you be able to absorb all the excess produce I can send your way?” Currently, we send 2-3 pallets of product each week during peak season, and I know there is more out there. Joe's answer – was yes, and he explained the thousands of meals each day they would be able to produce and the processing capacity they would have to take advantage of the bumper crops that arise. This was meaningful to me on two fronts – as a farmer and as a person who is committed to ending hunger in Maine by 2030. I have been engaged in hunger prevention for over 20 years.

All farms have surplus produce sometimes called food loss (which can be as much as 30%). There are programs that purchase this surplus at a price that covers fixed costs. Programs such as Good Shepherd Food Banks' Mainers Feed Mainers and Farms for Food Equity. Programs such as these when combined with the Food Security Hub are a win for people experiencing hunger and for Maine farms.

The one-time two million dollars will have a significant impact across Maine – feeding people and helping grow Maine agriculture.

Thank you and I encourage you to vote ought to pass.