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#### Staff Contacts

**Cullen Ryan**  
Executive Director

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April 19, 2023

Re: LD 1612, An Act to Address Food Insecurity and Support Local Agriculture

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and members of the Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee, my name is Cullen Ryan, and I am the Executive Director of Community Housing of Maine or CHOM. CHOM's small staff works collaboratively to houses Maine's most vulnerable people and advocates on their behalf. I serve on the Statewide Homeless Council and also chair the Maine Homeless Policy Committee, the Maine Continuum of Care Board of Directors, and the ESAC Long Term Stayers Committee.

I am testifying in support of LD 1612, An Act to Address Food Insecurity and Support Local Agriculture. This bill would provide one-time funding for the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to contract with the Preble Street Food Security Hub to help address food insecurity throughout the State.

Preble Street's Food Security Hub's unique, inclusive approach will assist in ending hunger in Maine. Phase 1 of this Food Security Hub is already underway and making a large difference in the lives of people and the community. Though Preble Street's Food Program serves more than 1 million meals each year, the need far exceeds the current capacity. Due to this, the new Food Security Hub was launched, and will be "a sustainable, comprehensive, and collaborative approach dedicated to ending hunger in Maine. The Preble Street Food Security Hub, the first food hub in Maine focused on food insecurity, is located at 75 Darling Avenue in South Portland. When completed, this 30,000 square foot mixed-use space will function as an industrial kitchen, food processing center, educational/vocational site, office space, and conference center dedicated to collective advocacy work and efforts to end hunger." (Source: <https://www.preblestreet.org/what-we-do/food-programs/foodsecurityhub/>).

Funding through this bill would allow Preble Street to continue to expand its Food Security Hub and fulfill its vision of working to end food insecurity in Maine, foster robust community partnerships, and strengthen local agriculture in an environmentally friendly and sustainable fashion.

Please support LD 1612 so that Maine can work to end and prevent food insecurity. No one does well without food.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.