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*Testimony of Senator Mattie Daughtry supporting*  
**LD 2093, An Act to Address Food Insecurity by Helping Maine Residents Access Locally Produced Food**

*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry*  
January 22, 2024

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and Esteemed Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry, my name is Mattie Daughtry, and I proudly represent Senate District 23, which includes Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, Pownal, Chebeague Island, and part of Yarmouth. Today, I am pleased to offer testimony in strong support of LD 2093, “An Act to Address Food Insecurity by Helping Maine Residents Access Locally Produced Food.”

I have long supported Maine’s nutrition incentive programs, like Harvest Bucks and Farm Fresh Rewards, which help consumers and shoppers with low incomes use their EBT/SNAP benefits to purchase local produce from Maine farms. Indeed, I have seen the success of this program from the vantage point of my booth/stall at the Brunswick Farmers Market. I hear from consumers, farmers, and my fellow vendors alike that Harvest Bucks benefit farmers, shoppers, and vendors.

LD 2093 would increase the success of Maine nutrition incentive programs, benefitting more farms and more people who experience food insecurity. Just as important, LD 2093 would leverage Federal dollars: For every \$1 that Maine invests, the State of Maine would receive \$2 from the Federal government -- \$1 from a USDA grant and \$1 from Mainers spending EBT/SNAP benefits on Maine farms and food producers. Because secured State funding is necessary for these programs to exist and grow, why not take advantage of the Federal matching funds? In 2022, there was \$1.2 million in additional sales at over 90 farmers markets, farm stands, and small stores in Maine. In fact, 20 to 30% of farmer sales come from Maine Harvest Bucks, boosting farm viability and helping markets grow.

Let’s also consider the bigger picture. Between December 2023 and January 2024, three severe storms knocked out power, toppled trees, pummeled the working waterfront, and washed away buildings and roads. I saw the damage in Harpswell, Freeport, Brunswick, and Chebeague Island. Climate change is here, and it is destructive. LD 2093 would be a critical investment in community resilience that will help Mainers cope with increasing climate uncertainty.

Here’s how: Maine farmers markets create local food access points in over 90 communities, helping ensure that Mainers can still access food even when an economy downturn, a natural disaster, or a pandemic disrupts the global food supply chain. I’ll also point out that Maine’s

Climate Action Plan calls for 30% of local food being consumed in Maine by 2030 – which isn't that far away.

For these reasons, I urge the Committee to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 2093.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mattie Daughtry".

**Mattie Daughtry**

Assistant Senate Majority Leader, Senate District 23

*Brunswick, Freeport, Harpswell, Pownal, Chebeague Island, and part of Yarmouth*