



# Permanent Commission RACIAL, INDIGENOUS & TRIBAL POPULATIONS

## **LD 2093 “An Act to Address Food Insecurity by Helping Maine Residents Access Locally Produced Food ”**

**January 09, 2024**

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry.

My name is Rae Sage, and I am the Policy Coordinator for the Permanent Commission on the Status of Racial, Indigenous, and Tribal Populations. The Permanent Commission’s role is to examine racial disparities across all systems and advise Maine State Government on ways to improve the status and outcomes of historically disadvantaged racial, Indigenous, and tribal populations.

According to Maine’s Roadmap to End Hunger by 2030, the causes of food insecurity are not rooted in a scarcity of available food. Food insecurity is most often a function of economic insecurity, meaning hunger is a symptom of poverty.<sup>1</sup> With this knowledge, the Permanent Commission fully supports LD 2093 as it will provide increased and ongoing funding for programs that make fresh local produce accessible to the communities that need it most.

The DACF Roadmap to End Hunger report described food insecurity as a crisis in Maine, impacting 11% of households in the state, or 153,000 people a year. The report notes that although the problem is widespread, stark disparities exist: rates of food insecurity increase to 28% for all people of color and to 52% for African immigrants.

---

<sup>1</sup> Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry. “Everyone at the table: Maine’s Roadmap to End Hunger by 2030”. [maines-roadmap-to-end-hunger.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/dacf/roadmap-to-end-hunger.pdf)

According to the Department of Health and Human services, in February of 2023 about 100,000 Maine households received SNAP benefits.<sup>2</sup> Continuing to fund this program will support all Mainers receiving SNAP benefits and give DHHS the opportunity to further tailor their program to support those most harmed by food insecurity. The strategic goals of the Roadmap to End Hunger include:

- Ensuring consistent, easy access to healthy, culturally appropriate food.
- Changing the narrative of food insecurity to focus on collective responsibility and center the voices of impacted people.

By abiding by these strategic goals, a more direct difference can be made in the historically underserved communities who rest at the heart of Maine's food insecurity challenges. Thank you.

---

<sup>2</sup> [Help with Food Costs as Extra COVID SNAP Funds End | Department of Health and Human Services \(maine.gov\)](#)