

Dear members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee:

RE:LD2188

I'm writing to you in support of the Tier Program adopting the latest increase of cost of production for Maine dairy farms. Our dairy farm, like so many others, relies on this check to ensure we can continue to run our business. Period. We are the last remaining commercial dairy farm in Knox County; when we started our farm in 2015 I believe there were over a dozen. As first generation farmers we have poured everything we have into this farm and have always been grateful for the Tier Program, as others have said it has truly acted as a lifeline during lean times.

My husband and I own and operate Bo Lait Farm, where we farm organically on approximately 150 acres and milk between 50-60 Holsteins. We make our own feed, raise our own young stock, and do this with minimal outside help because the cost of production is so high. Our farm is protected by Maine Farmland Trust and we hope to continue to build our business for our family, and perhaps for our children to take over in the future. But the uncertainty within the dairy industry can sometimes make this dream feel difficult to imagine; programs such as the Tier Program give us hope that we will continue to have support through the rough patches.

Maine dairy farms support an incredible amount of local businesses, from our sawdust supplier to our milk room chemicals, farm equipment stores to our veterinarian and hoof trimmer. The monies from the tier checks almost certainly funnel back into the Maine economy from every producer that receives one. In addition to supporting the economy, dairy farms provide beauty, natural habitat, and acres of green space that may otherwise be parceled off and sold. We feel lucky to work and live within Maine's rural landscape, and appreciate every bit of support we receive in order to continue to do so.

Thank you for your consideration,

Alexis MacDonald
Bo Lait Farm, LLC