

February 6, 2024

The Honorable Henry Ingwerson
Senate Chair
Committee on Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry
100 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

The Honorable William Pluecker
House Chair
Committee on Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry
100 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Chairs Ingwerson and Pluecker:

On behalf of Dairy Farmers of America (DFA), I encourage your support of LD 2188, Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 26: Producer Margins, a Major Substantive Rule of the Maine Milk Commission. This proposal will ensure Maine’s dairy farmers are adequately supported by the Maine State Dairy Tier Program.

DFA is a national milk marketing cooperative that serves and is owned by nearly 11,000 dairy farmers on nearly 6,000 family farms – 29 of which are in the state of Maine. Those family farmers are invested in 82 processing facilities across the United States, including Oakhurst Dairy in Portland, Maine, which provide a wide range of dairy products, including fluid milk, cheese, butter, ice cream and dairy ingredients.

Maine’s Dairy Tier Program provides a direct payment to dairy farmers when the amount they receive from the marketplace for their milk falls below their cost of production. Keeping the cost of production figure updated is critical to ensure the program operates as intended. By passing LD 2188, the cost of production will be updated to accurately reflect the results from the 2023 Cost of Production Study.

According to the International Dairy Foods Association, the Maine Dairy Industry has a total economic impact of \$3.06 billion to the state’s economy while supporting 14,600 jobs. We believe the Maine State Dairy Tier Program has benefitted dairy farmers, effectively slowing the loss of dairy farms in the state, supporting rural economies, jobs, and critical agricultural infrastructure.

DFA asks for your support of LD 2188, which supports the state’s dairy industry by ensuring that Maine’s State Dairy Tier Pricing Program remains a viable tool. If you have any questions or need additional information about DFA’s footprint in the state, please contact me at 607-252-5548.

Sincerely,



Brad Keating
Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Northeast Area

CC: Members of the Joint Committee on Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry

