

Katherine Webb Clark  
Windsor  
LD 2188

Dear Senator Ingwersen, Representative Pluecker, and esteemed members of the Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry Committee:

I am writing today on behalf of my husband, Nate Clark, myself, and our family organic dairy, the Reed Farm, in support of LD 2188 and to urge your consideration of all future efforts to protect and enhance Maine's Tier Program.

Nate and I are both from families in Maine for 10 or more generations. He grew up in Dresden and I grew up in Pittston. We both attended college out of state and returned to live in Maine. We purchased the Reed Farm in Windsor, in 2017.

The Reed Farm consists of about 240 protected acres, where we milk 50 cows to produce 600,000 pounds of milk annually. We crop an additional 250 leased acres in three towns. We are deeply embedded in the local economy, regularly using the services of:

- 6 local mechanics
- 2 local welders
- 3 fuel companies, two of which are locally owned
- 2 local electricians
- 2 farm equipment dealers
- 2 local veterinarians
- 2 local carpenters
- 2 local excavation contractors
- 3 local plumbers
- 4 farm supply stores, three of which are locally owned
- 2 local hardware stores
- 3 lumber mills for bedding and building materials as well.

An average of 6 commercial trucks per week stop at our farmyard.

The relatively high cost of production on dairy farms ( in both good economic times and in bad) ensures a very high proportion of the farms' income is spent on services (mostly local services) that support farm operations. For services that uniquely serve farms, such as large animal veterinarians, dairy farms may generate enough need for any given provider to remain in business in a geographical region. In this way, dairy farms help smaller farms, homesteads, and hobbyists retain access to such services that may otherwise disappear.

Like all farms, the Reed Farm has felt the rising cost of production in our bottom line. Because we are producing bulk milk under a contract, we have no ability to pass on higher costs to the consumer. It is safe to say that for the scale of our family farm, we would not be able to keep our doors open under the present economic conditions without the Maine Tier.

Thank you for your support of LD 2188, and thereby the remaining Maine dairies, our farming neighbors, farm service providers, and the local economy.

Nathan and Katie Webb Clark  
The Reed Farm  
Windsor, ME