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**Testimony of Senator Scott Cyrway
Presenting L.D. 1348, An Act to Limit the Decibel Level of Fireworks Near Working Farms
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
May 7, 2021**

Good morning Senator Deschambault, Representative Warren and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety: I am State Senator Scott Cyrway and I represent District 16, which includes Albion, Benton, Clinton, Fairfield, Unity Township, Waterville and Winslow. I am before you today to present testimony on L.D. 1348, An Act to Limit the Decibel Level of Fireworks Near Working Farms.

As someone who comes from an agricultural background, I am well-aware of how high strung horses and other livestock animals can become at loud noises and quick movements so when the Maine Farm Bureau asked me to submit legislation minimizing the use of fireworks around livestock, I was happy to do so. I should mention, however, that since submitting this legislation it has become clear that tracking decibel levels and monitoring sound, which can travel great distance, is not easily conducted.

I have had a handful of conversations with those in the agricultural community and the firework industry over the last couple of weeks and based on those conversations, I am bringing forward an amendment to L.D. 1348, which was proposed by those in the firework industry. The amendment would require an individual that is using consumer fireworks, within 250' of a neighboring property owner's livestock pen or containment area, to notify the owner or manager of the livestock no less than five days in advance so precautions can be put in place to ensure the safety and well-being of the animals. In order to keep fireworks legal, while still respecting our farm communities around the state, I feel this is a good starting point and an attempt at addressing a real problem.

You will hear from others who would like to see that only "low-noise" fireworks be permitted outside of Urban Compact Zones, such as cities, when municipal ordinances are not in place. I am for the change to low-noise fireworks and believe this would help protect our livestock, but it has been brought to my attention, as you will hear from others, that there are very few low-noise fireworks available on the market. Additionally, enforcing municipal ordinances is difficult since we no longer have constables to rely on; we now rely on Fire Marshalls and law enforcement to deal with complaints, which is why addressing this on the state level makes the most sense.

With that, I would ask that you carefully consider the proposal before you. This is a complex matter and any step we can take to protect the well-being of animals engaged in agricultural production and livestock will be a step in the right direction. Again, I feel this will help to reduce possible injury to animals and their handlers, while keeping fireworks legal for those who wish to use them carefully and respectfully.

I thank you for your time and I am happy to work with the committee to come up with something to get the ball rolling if the amendment before you is not enough.