

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF

L.D. 636

AN ACT TO ENCOURAGE THE PURCHASE OF LOCAL FOODS FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan and members of the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee. I am Steven Bailey, executive director of Maine School Management Association, testifying on behalf of the legislative committees of the Maine School Boards Association and Maine School Superintendents Association in support of L.D. 636.

Our associations support Farm-to-School initiatives and believe it is a wonderful way to connect our students with the state's farming heritage, while providing them with fresh, locally sourced food.

The growth of farm-to-table is and can be better supported by encouraging more schools to buy locally. The way to do that is to provide additional funds. That would help offset the reality that locally-grown can be more expensive.

It also is a step in making the state more self-sustainable when it comes to the food we eat and allows our wonderful, small farms to expand their market.

Maine has the land, the water and the people who believe small farms can be viable and reduce our carbon footprint by reducing food trucked in from away. We urge your support.