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**TESTIMONY OF WILLIE SAWYER GRENIER,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MAINE AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM
TESTIFYING NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST LD 1429 -
AN ACT TO IMPLEMENT THE MOST TIME-SENSITIVE RECOMMENDATIONS OF
THE MAINE CLIMATE COUNCIL**

MAY 17, 2021

Good Morning Senator Benner, Representative Tucker and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.

I am submitting testimony today, on behalf of Maine Agriculture in the Classroom (MAITC), speaking NEITHER FOR NOR AGAINST Legislative Document 1429.

The purpose of Maine Agriculture in the Classroom Council as stated in Title 7: 242 is as follows:

Purpose. The purpose of the council is to promote an understanding of the food and fiber system in the State and the nation through the infusion of agricultural concepts into primary, secondary and postsecondary curricula. For the purposes of this section, "agricultural concepts" includes, but is not limited to:

- A. The importance of agriculture in the State and in the nation's history and development; [2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]
- B. The connections between geography, climate and agriculture; [2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]
- C. The relationship between technology and agricultural success and development; [2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]
- D. The economics of agriculture; [2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]
- E. The global aspects of agriculture; and [2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]
- F. The relationship of the food and fiber system to public policy issues. [2007, c. 456, §2 (NEW).]

Since the creation of the MAITC Council in 2007, an average of 200,000 Maine schoolchildren have been reached annually through agricultural education grants, curricula, teacher training, volunteer programs and remote learning resources. The monthly newsletter reaches over 5,000 educators and programs are administered for hundreds of college students studying education across the state each year.

At this time MAITC is a collaborator responsible for educational components of many Farm to School programs and works closely with The Department of Education, and The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to support agricultural education. For example, in a recent highly successful program called "Harvest of the Month", which



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promotes a different local food in school cafeterias each month, MAITC developed teaching units for classroom teachers on each different local product and supplied hard copy and electronic materials to all participating schools to connect the classroom learning (both virtual and in-person) to the HOM project in the cafeteria.

MAITC can be the perfect liaison to add an agricultural education component, in alignment with our mission, to section 3.2 of L.D. 1429 working collaboratively with the local food procurement specialists that already exist in the Department of Education and the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. Implementation of Section 3.2. A-D as currently written in this bill, related to procurement and cafeteria training, would **not** be part of our mission as stated in statute above. We feel strongly that the mission and purpose of MAITC must be upheld, and question if it would be the best use of public and private resources to duplicate efforts of pre-existing programs at these two departments. We strongly urge the committee to rethink MAITC involvement as currently stated in this bill.

To view the resources and programs of MAITC please visit the website at www.MaineAgintheClassroom.org Lessons, videos, and teaching units will be found by clicking the LESSONS tab.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony. We are happy to answer any questions at maitc@maine.gov

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Willie Sawyer Grenier".

MAITC Executive Director