



May 19, 2023

Springworks Farm Testimony in Support of LD 1918, *An Act to Modernize Maine's Business Incentive Programs by Creating the Dirigo Business Incentives Program and Eliminating Certain Other Tax Incentive Programs*

Good morning, Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business. My name is Trevor Kenkel and I am writing on behalf of Springworks Farm to express support for LD 1918, *An Act to Modernize Maine's Business Incentive Programs by Creating the Dirigo Business Incentives Program and Eliminating Certain Other Tax Incentive Programs*.

In 2014, I founded Springworks Farm in Lisbon Maine before starting my freshman year at Bowdoin college. At Springworks, we use fish and plants in a recirculating aquaponics system to grow organic lettuce year-round with just a fraction of the resources required by conventional methods. Since then, we have grown to be one of the largest organic lettuce producers in the Northeast, developed in-house technology, and plan to expand our site by half a million square feet over the next six years. As an entrepreneur and community member, I believe that LD 1918 will foster innovation in Maine.

The incentive program offers a clear framework to promote economic growth in rural communities like ours where access to investment can be a challenge. The tax credits will not only incentivize investment in infrastructure and equipment, but also help rural businesses secure the funding required to expand operations, spur job creation, and attract capital investment into Maine. The focus on sectors like manufacturing, agriculture, and professional services will also give entrepreneurs the opportunity to explore new approaches to our heritage industries.

I am also excited to see the legislation's emphasis on capital investment and workforce development. At the farm we have over forty full-time employees, and with the addition of our fourth greenhouse this summer, we expect to add another forty full-time positions over the next twelve months. I can attest to how powerful it would be to build teams in conjunction with a qualified worker training program. This structure would help businesses like ours fill open positions with skilled employees while increasing access to quality jobs.

I believe that LD 1918 will encourage innovation, particularly in rural areas, and provide more opportunities for Maine's talented workforce.

Thank you,

Trevor Kenkel
Founder and CEO of Springworks Farm Maine Inc.