

Nicolas Lindholm  
Penobscot

I am an organic wild blueberry farmer, certified by MOFGA since 1996, with a seasonal full-time crew of 12-16 people that harvest and process 25,000-35,000 lbs. of fresh-pack and frozen berries. My wife and I own and lease seven wild blueberry fields across five towns in our area, and sell most of our crop direct-to-consumer from our farm, farmers markets, CSA, local stores, and our website. We make several value-added products from our crop, which provides year-round income for the farm. We support LD1022, as we see farm work and farm workers as highly skilled, highly valued labor and would like to see the end of exploitive labor practices that cheapen food and devalue farm work. The current, longstanding conditions that this bill addresses are built on exploiting the labor (primarily of people of color) to the benefit of the industry business owners and landowners, and are the residue of policies steeped in racism from the 1930's when they were created. We have built our farm business on an economic model that supports and has always paid above-minimum wage labor and kept work weeks to under 45 hours, and so from experience know that changes in the status quo of how our country has come to produce its food can and should be changed to support an ideology that holds farm work as highly skilled and highly valued labor. Thank you.