

AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN MAINE'S AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FOREST ECONOMY BY FUNDING THE MAINE AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND FOREST PRODUCTS INVESTMENT FUND AND AMENDING RELATED PROVISIONS OF LAW

Capitalizes the Maine Agriculture, Food and Forest Products Investment Fund - established by the 130th Legislature to facilitate strategic investments in the state's agricultural, food and forest products processing and manufacturing industries.

QUICK FACTS

Goal: Bipartisan bill to support Maine's heritage industries

Sponsor: Speaker Talbot-Ross, House District 40

Amount: \$10,000,000 in FY2024-25 for infrastructure investment and technical assistance to critical businesses

This Bill: Provides a unique opportunity to ensure a sustained funding source for the state's critical and iconic agriculture, food and forest products businesses, enabling them to innovate and grow.



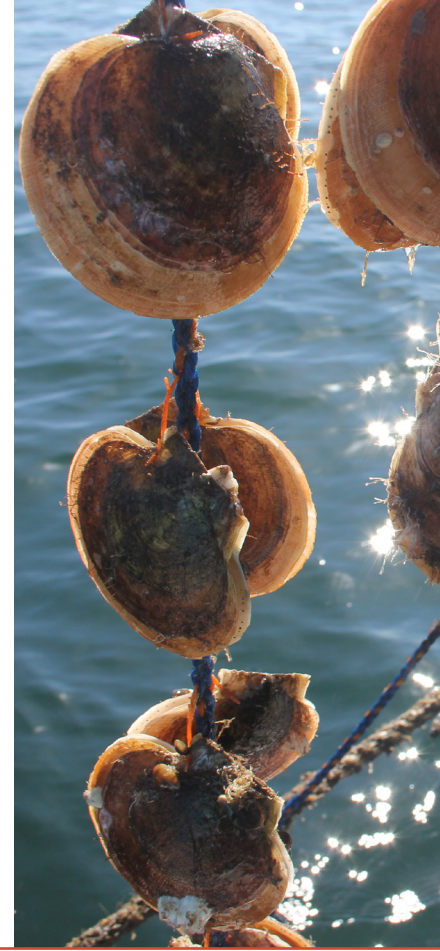
KEY FEATURES

- **Completes legislative work begun in the 129th and 130th Legislatures**, which studied the need for and established the Maine Agriculture, Food and Forest Products Investment Fund.
- **Successor bill to LD 1670, *An Act to Strengthen the Maine Agriculture, Food and Forest Products Economy and Amend Related Provisions of Law*** in the 131st, 1st session.
- **Supports the resiliency of Maine's food supply and production chain through strategic investments** in Maine agriculture, food systems, and forestry businesses.
- **Fills a gap in needed capital and business assistance** that does not currently exist in Maine.
- **Ensures equitable access to capital and technical assistance** for historically disadvantaged populations.
- **Supports existing industry efforts from Maine-based organizations** to propel innovation, business growth and job creation in early-stage and start-up food processing/manufacturing businesses, which employ local people and source from Maine growers/producers, multiplying each investment.
- **Promotes interagency coordination and public-private partnerships.**
- **Modeled on successful programs** in Vermont and Massachusetts.
- **All of Maine benefits from successful businesses in these sectors.**



ALIGNS WITH AND IMPLEMENTS

- **Maine Economic Development Strategy 2020-2029:** A Focus on Talent and Innovation and DECD Domestic Trade Project (to ensure robust, climate-safe food supply chain, foster talent and innovation in food manufacturing, marine systems, and the biobased economy)
- **Maine Climate Action Plan** (statutory objectives, to reduce carbon emissions and build local and regional food systems)
- Recommendations of the Permanent Commission's **Land Access for Indigenous & African American Farmers Report** (2022)
- Maine Food Cluster Project Findings, highlighted in **Growing Maine's Food Industry, Growing Maine**
- **FocusMaine** (growing quality food and agriculture jobs in Maine)
- Maine's role in **New England Feeding New England: Cultivating A Reliable Food Supply** (USDA funded project to promote supply chain resilience and self-reliance aka "30% by 2030")
- Maine's **Ending Hunger by 2030 Plan** (food security is economic security)
- **Maine Food Strategy Framework: A Tool for Advancing Maine's Food System**



LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

LD 2212 has been scheduled for a public hearing by the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry next **Wednesday, February 28th at 1:15PM.**

- **Testify In person:** the Public Hearing starts at 1:15 pm, in Room 214 of the Burton Cross State House. Bring 20 copies of your written testimony.
- **Submit Written Testimony and/or Register to testify by Zoom** via the [Maine Legislative online portal](#) 30 min. before scheduled start time. (Written testimony can be submitted at any time up until the work session where they will vote on the bill, so if you miss Wednesday's deadline, there will be another opportunity to engage.)
 - Choose: Public Hearing
 - Choose a committee (from dropdown list): Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.
 - Choose a date: FEB 28, 2024 1:15 PM
 - Select the bill you want to testify/submit testimony for: [LD 2212, An Act to Strengthen Maine's Agriculture, Food System and Forest Products Infrastructure Investment](#)
 - IF YOU PLAN TO TESTIFY: Check off the box underneath the red text that says "I would like to testify electronically over Zoom". If you do not check this off, you will not get any Zoom information sent to you.
 - Click on Upload File, to upload your Testimony.
 - Complete your information: Name, Town or Organization.
 - Click Submit/Register

If you have any problems call either the:
Legislative Information Office - (207) 287-1692
Committee Clerk - (207) 287-1330

Need Help With Testimony or Have Questions? Contact:

Amy Winston, Senior Policy Director

Amy.winston@ceimaine.org

207-504-6339

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