



MOFGA Testimony In Support Of  
LD 1483 - *An Act to Protect the Rights of Agricultural Workers*  
April 18, 2023

Good afternoon Senator Tipping, Representative Roeder and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing. My name is Heather Spalding and I am deputy director of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA). I am speaking in support of LD 1483 – *An Act to Protect the Rights of Agricultural Workers*.

A broad-based community, MOFGA is creating a food system that is healthy and fair for all of us. Through education, training and advocacy, we are helping farmers thrive, making more local, organic food available and building sustainable communities. MOFGA certifies 535 organic farms and processing operations representing roughly \$90 million in sales and we are working hard to create opportunities for Maine’s next generation of farmers. Each of these farmers is a Maine businessperson for whom economic health and environmental health are interdependent.

We are advocating for reform of farm labor laws at the national and state level, including ensuring that a farm worker is eligible for minimum wage and overtime compensation, has a protected right to organize and bargain collectively with an employer, and has assurance that the employer may not interfere with reasonable access to key service providers on the farm or with visitors to the worker’s living space.

LD 1483 addresses the basic human need for support and interaction with family and friends.

MOFGA is striving to create an agriculture where farmers are helping mitigate climate change while making a good living that allows them to support their families and our communities. We are working to build a future where every Maine child, regardless of race, religion, gender identity, geography or socioeconomic status comes home to plenty of healthy local, organic food. This will only happen if Maine’s agricultural workers are held in high esteem and afforded the dignity and support that they need to thrive.

Thank you very much and I would be happy to answer questions if you have any.

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*The Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA) started in 1971 and is the oldest and largest state organic organization in the country. We’re a broad-based community that educates about and advocates for organic agriculture, illuminating its interdependence with a healthy environment, local food production, and thriving communities. We have 15,000 members, we certify more than 500 organic farms and processing facilities representing \$90 million in sales, and we are working hard to provide training and create opportunities for Maine’s next generation of farmers. Each of these farmers is a Maine businessperson for whom economic health and environmental health are interdependent. While MOFGA envisions a future of healthy ecosystems, communities, people and economies sustained by the practices of organic agriculture, we attribute our success to collaboration and outreach to growers across the management spectrum.*

