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**STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**

June 18, 2025

Senator Craig Hickman, Senate Chair,
Representative Anne-Marie Mastraccio, House Chair,
Government Oversight Committee, 132nd Legislature
c/o Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability
82 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: Inspections by the Maine Seed Potato Certification Program

Dear Senator Hickman and Representative Mastraccio:


The Judiciary Committee considered a bill earlier this session, LD 1667, Resolve, to Allow Hemphill Farms, Inc. to Sue the State, which authorizes Hemphill Farms, Inc., in Presque Isle, which claims to have suffered damages in connection with actions taken by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry under the Maine Seed Potato Certification Program, to sue the department for damages resulting from a lack of required seed import inspections that may have contributed to bacterial ring rot going unnoticed and spreading to a large portion of the farm's crop.


In the second regular session of the 131st Legislature the Judiciary Committee also considered LD 2202, Resolve, to Allow Ireland Farms, Inc. to Sue the State which authorized Ireland Farms Inc., in Presque Isle Maine to sue the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for substantially similar conduct as is claimed in LD 1667.

The Judiciary Committee, having received two substantially similar requests for authorization to sue the State in consecutive years, feels that these requests may be indicative of a more systemic problem within the Maine Seed Potato Certification Program and respectfully requests that the Government Oversight Committee consider adding a review of the Maine Seed Potato Certification Program to the annual work plan of the Office of Program Evaluation and Program Accountability (OPEGA).

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,


Sen. Anne M. Carney
Senate Chair


Rep. Amy D. Kuhn
House Chair

c: Joint Standing Committee on the Judiciary