

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34

Date: (Filing No. H-)

AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

Reproduced and distributed under the direction of the Clerk of the House.

**STATE OF MAINE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
129TH LEGISLATURE
FIRST REGULAR SESSION**

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT “ ” to H.P. 726, L.D. 971, Bill, “An Act To Encourage the Purchase and Sale of Locally Grown and Raised Crops and Products”

Amend the bill by striking out the title and substituting the following:

'Resolve, To Establish a Specialty Crops Certification Cost-share Pilot Program'

Amend the bill by striking out everything after the title and inserting the following:

'Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry stands ready to establish immediately a specialty crops certification cost-share pilot program for qualified farms to certify their crops under the "Good Agricultural Practices" and "Good Handling Practices" voluntary audit programs under the United States Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service; and

Whereas, as implementation of the federal Food Safety Modernization Act progresses, there is an increasing interest among growers of specialty crops in voluntary audit programs; and

Whereas, these voluntary audit programs are among the best tools available to growers and distributors of specialty crops to ensure a base level of sanitation and food safety; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1. Establishment of a specialty crops certification cost-share pilot program. Resolved: That the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall establish a specialty crops certification cost-share pilot program, referred to in this resolve as "the pilot program" for a period of 4 years. Under the program,

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

1 qualified farms may be entitled to reimbursement of up to 50% of the cost of certification
2 of specialty crops under the "Good Agricultural Practices" and "Good Handling
3 Practices" voluntary audit programs under the United States Department of Agriculture,
4 Agricultural Marketing Service. "Specialty crops" means qualifying fruits and
5 vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits and horticulture and nursery crops, including
6 floriculture;

7 **Sec. 2. Reimbursement. Resolved:** That reimbursement of funds under the pilot
8 program is for initial one-time payment and may not be more than \$500 per qualified
9 farm;

10 **Sec. 3. Report. Resolved:** That the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation
11 and Forestry shall monitor the pilot program and report findings and recommendations to
12 the joint standing committee having jurisdiction over agricultural matters no later than
13 December 15, 2023. The joint standing committee having jurisdiction over agricultural
14 matters may submit a bill to the Second Regular Session of the 131st Legislature relating
15 to the subject matter of the report.

16 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this
17 legislation takes effect when approved.'

18 SUMMARY

19 This amendment strikes and replaces the bill with a resolve and adds an emergency
20 preamble and emergency clause. The amendment directs the Commissioner of
21 Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to establish a specialty crops certification cost-
22 share pilot program in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry and
23 authorizes the department to reimburse qualified farms for up to 50% of the cost of
24 certification of specialty crops under the "Good Agricultural Practices" and "Good
25 Handling Practices" voluntary audit programs under the United States Department of
26 Agriculture, Agricultural Marketing Service. The amendment provides that
27 reimbursement of funds under the program is for initial one-time payment and may not be
28 more than \$500 per qualified farm. The amendment also directs the commissioner to
29 monitor the 4-year pilot program and to report back to the joint standing committee
30 having jurisdiction over agricultural matters no later than December 15, 2023 with
31 findings and recommendations.

32 FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED

33 (See attached)