



132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 1601

H.P. 1059

House of Representatives, April 10, 2025

An Act to Create Parity in Poultry Processing and Farming Licenses and Inspections

Reference to the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative COLLAMORE of Pittsfield.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 7 MRSA §449** is enacted to read:

3 **§449. Stakeholder group to develop uniform interpretation of United States**
4 **Department of Agriculture's regulations and exemptions**

5 The commissioner shall convene a stakeholder group to develop a uniform
6 interpretation of the United States Department of Agriculture's regulations and exemptions
7 to ensure the uniformity of interpretation of the regulations and exemptions by an employee
8 or official of the State or an employee or official of the Federal Government or of any other
9 governmental entity of this State authorized by the commissioner to perform inspection
10 functions related to agricultural products under an agreement between the commissioner
11 and the governmental entity.

12 **1. Membership.** The stakeholder group must consist of 16 members, and each county
13 must be represented by a member of the stakeholder group. Of the required members, 14
14 must be representatives of nonorganic farms and 2 must be representatives of farms
15 certified as organic by an organization accredited by the United States Department of
16 Agriculture. The stakeholder group must consist of the following members to be appointed
17 by the Governor:

18 A. A representative of a small farm with an annual gross income between \$50,000 and
19 \$250,000;

20 B. A representative of a medium-sized farm with an annual gross income between
21 \$250,000 and \$1,000,000;

22 C. A representative of a large farm with an annual gross income greater than
23 \$1,000,000;

24 D. A pork or beef livestock farmer;

25 E. A dairy farmer;

26 F. A poultry farmer;

27 G. A farmer of fruits;

28 H. A farmer of vegetables;

29 I. A farmer of wild blueberries;

30 J. A farmer of potatoes;

31 K. A livestock processor;

32 L. A poultry processor; and

33 M. Four farmers representing the counties in the State not represented by the members
34 in paragraphs A to L.

35 **2. Election of chair; vice-chair.** At the first meeting of the stakeholder group the
36 members shall elect from the membership a chair and a vice-chair and shall determine their
37 duties.

38 **3. Existing license holders; application of regulations and exemptions.** A licensed
39 processor or producer, as defined in section 423, subsections 10 and 11, respectively, has
40 5 years to comply with any change of interpretation made by the stakeholder group of the

United States Department of Agriculture's regulations and exemptions pursuant to this section.

Sec. 2. Report. On or before December 3, 2025, the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall submit to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry a report describing the strategies, findings and recommendations, including any necessary legislation, of the stakeholder group under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 7, section 449. After reviewing the report, the committee may report out legislation relating to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

SUMMARY

This bill requires the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to convene a stakeholder group to develop a uniform interpretation of the United States Department of Agriculture's regulations and exemptions to ensure the uniformity of interpretation of the regulations and exemptions by the State's agricultural inspectors. On or before December 3, 2025, the commissioner is required to submit a report describing the strategies, findings and recommendations, including any necessary legislation, of the stakeholder group to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, which may report out legislation relating to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.