

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 606

H.P. 374

House of Representatives, February 25, 2025

**Resolve, to Study Barriers to Financial Assistance Programs for
Farmers and Food Producers**

Received by the Clerk of the House on February 20, 2025. Referred to the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

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

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative PLUECKER of Warren.

1 **Sec. 1. Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to seek**
2 **stakeholder input on lowering barriers to financial assistance programs.**
3 **Resolved:** That the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall direct
4 staff of the Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources to study the bureau's financial
5 assistance programs for farmers and food producers to identify barriers to these programs
6 and methods to eliminate those barriers and increase the effectiveness of the programs in
7 addressing farmer and food producer needs. This study must be undertaken within existing
8 resources and must include at least 2 listening sessions with farmers and food producers.
9 The listening sessions must encompass topics, including, but not limited to, the following:

- 10 1. Application materials, submission procedures and timelines for application retention
- 11 by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry;
- 12 2. Contact procedures to inform applicants of new program opportunities;
- 13 3. Accessibility for beginning and emerging farmers and the expansion of education
- 14 about department programs, partnerships with community organizations to reach new
- 15 groups of farmers and identification of farmers who currently underuse department
- 16 programs; and
- 17 4. Input on how the department can organize and consolidate its financial assistance
- 18 offerings.

19 **Sec. 2. Report. Resolved:** That, by January 15, 2026, the Commissioner of
20 Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall submit a report detailing the results of the
21 study under section 1 and any recommended legislation to the Joint Standing Committee
22 on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, which may report out legislation to the Second
23 Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

24 SUMMARY

25 This resolve requires the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to
26 direct staff of the Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources to study the bureau's
27 financial assistance programs for farmers and food producers to identify barriers to these
28 programs and methods to eliminate those barriers and increase the effectiveness of the
29 programs in addressing farmer and food producer needs. The commissioner is required to
30 submit a report by January 15, 2026 to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture,
31 Conservation and Forestry, which may report out legislation to the Second Regular Session
32 of the 132nd Legislature.