

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 1252

H.P. 827

House of Representatives, March 25, 2025

**An Act to Amend the Laws Governing the Maine Agriculture, Food
System and Forest Products Infrastructure Investment Advisory
Board**

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative HEPLER of Woolwich.
Cosponsored by Senator BRENNER of Cumberland and
Representatives: BUNKER of Farmington, COOPER of Windham, CRAY of Palmyra, DILL
of Old Town, FROST of Belgrade, GUERRETTE of Caribou, JACKSON of Oxford,
PLUECKER of Warren.

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

Sec. 1. 7 MRSA §320-C, sub-§7 is enacted to read:

7. Uses of disbursements limited. Disbursements from the funds are limited to producers that have a processing or manufacturing facility that is located in the State or producers that are seeking to establish a new processing or manufacturing facility in the State. A producer receiving a disbursement pursuant to this section shall use the disbursement to support the operations of a processing or manufacturing facility located in this State for the purposes described in this subsection, including but not limited to obtaining equipment and investing in supply chain infrastructure to grow, harvest, process or manufacture agricultural, food or forest products used in commercial products. In carrying out these purposes, the producer shall obtain, to the extent practicable, agricultural, food or forest products from a farm or a forest or waters in the State or from offshore waters to be collected in the State.

Sec. 2. 7 MRSA §320-C, sub-§8 is enacted to read:

8. Board member conflicts of interest. If a member of the board has a conflict of interest with regard to a vote the board is holding, the member may not participate in that vote. For the purposes of this subsection, "conflict of interest" means that the member of the board or the member's immediate family member has or would acquire a direct and substantial personal financial interest, distinct from that of the general public, in an enterprise that would be financially benefited by a proposed fund allocation. For the purposes of this subsection, "immediate family member" means an individual's spouse, domestic partner or child.

SUMMARY

This bill modifies provisions of the law governing the Maine Agriculture, Food System and Forest Products Infrastructure Investment Advisory Board and disbursements from the Maine Agriculture, Food and Forest Products Investment Fund, which the advisory board oversees.

The bill requires that disbursements may be made only to a producer of agricultural, food or forest products that has or is seeking to establish a processing or manufacturing facility located in the State. A producer receiving a disbursement must use the disbursement to support the operations of a processing or manufacturing facility located in this State for the following purposes, including, but not limited to, obtaining equipment and investing in supply chain infrastructure to grow, harvest, process or manufacture agricultural, food or forest products used in commercial products. In carrying out these purposes, the producer must obtain, to the extent practicable, agricultural, food or forest products from a farm or a forest or waters in the State or from offshore waters to be collected in the State.

The bill also prohibits a member of the advisory board from participating in any vote when that member has a conflict of interest. A conflict of interest exists when the board member or a member of the board member's immediate family has or would acquire a direct and substantial personal financial interest, distinct from that of the general public, in an enterprise that would be financially benefited by a proposed fund allocation.