

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

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Legislative Document

No. 1386

H.P. 908

House of Representatives, April 1, 2025

**An Act to Provide Emergency One-time Relief from the Wild  
Blueberry Tax for Sellers in Maine and Partial Relief for Processors  
and Shippers**

(EMERGENCY)

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Reference to the Committee on Taxation suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT  
Clerk

Presented by Representative STROUT of Harrington.  
Cosponsored by Senator MOORE of Washington and  
Representatives: ARATA of New Gloucester, FAULKINGHAM of Winter Harbor, LIBBY of  
Auburn, MINGO of Calais, TUELL of East Machias, Senator: MARTIN of Oxford.

**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 average price paid to wild blueberry growers, adjusted for inflation, has declined by approximately 45% over the past 20 years; and

**Whereas**, the price of supplies critically necessary for farming has increased significantly in recent years; and

**Whereas**, over the past several years, interest rates on farmers' bank loans for property other than real property have risen faster than at any point in the prior 40 years; and

**Whereas**, the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine, which is funded by revenue from a tax imposed on wild blueberry sellers, processors and shippers, is dedicated to conserving and promoting the prosperity and welfare of this State and of the wild blueberry industry of this State; and

**Whereas**, although the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine is seeking solutions to improve the economic condition of the State's wild blueberry industry, this legislation is necessary to provide immediate financial assistance to wild blueberry growers; 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 enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

**Sec. 1. Temporary suspension of tax on sellers of blueberries harvested in the State.** Notwithstanding the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 36, section 4303, for calendar year 2025 only, a processor or shipper responsible for reporting and paying the tax imposed by Title 36, section 4303 may not charge or collect any portion of the tax levied under Title 36, section 4303 from a seller of wild blueberries harvested in the State in calendar year 2025. A processor or shipper remains responsible for payment of 1/2 of the tax imposed by Title 36, section 4303 on wild blueberries harvested in the State in calendar year 2025 and for collection and payment of the entire tax imposed by Title 36, section 4303 on all wild blueberries not harvested in the State in calendar year 2025.

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

## SUMMARY

Current law imposes a tax at the rate of 1 1/2 cents per pound on wild blueberries shipped or processed in the State; 1/2 of the tax is paid by the seller and 1/2 of the tax is paid by the processor or the shipper. This bill exempts sellers of blueberries harvested in the State from the imposition of the blueberry tax for the 2025 calendar year, which will result in a tax of 0.75 cents per pound on processors and shippers for blueberries harvested in the State. Processors and shippers continue to be responsible for collecting and paying the tax on blueberries harvested outside the State.