

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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127th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2015

Legislative Document

No. 1291

H.P. 877

House of Representatives, April 9, 2015

An Act To Promote Food Self-sufficiency for the People of the State

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 HICKMAN of Winthrop.
Cosponsored by Senator SAVIELLO of Franklin and
Representatives: DUNPHY of Old Town, GROHMAN of Biddeford, JORGENSEN of
Portland, MAREAN of Hollis, SAUCIER of Presque Isle, SHERMAN of Hodgdon, Senators:
LANGLEY of Hancock, WHITTEMORE of Somerset.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 7 MRSA §219** is enacted to read:

3 **§219. Food self-sufficiency**

4 **1. Farm labor link network.** The department shall maintain an agricultural jobs
5 network linking farms and facilities processing agricultural products grown in the State
6 with available workers who wish to work on a farm or in a local food industry. An
7 available worker under this subsection may include a person involved in raising,
8 processing, preparing or preserving food or who is required to perform community
9 service as a low-income recipient of state supplemental income benefits or under a court
10 order. The department shall coordinate with the University of Maine Cooperative
11 Extension to identify farms and food processing facilities willing to participate in the
12 network and coordinate with the Department of Labor, the Department of Health and
13 Human Services, the Department of Economic and Community Development, the
14 Department of Corrections and the Judicial Department in identifying available workers
15 willing to participate in the network. If a worker participating in the network wishes to
16 pursue additional training or a career in agriculture or food production, the department
17 shall refer the person to available resources or programs that train workers or develop
18 skills or business practices in farming, food production or food processing. A worker may
19 meet the requirements for community service obligations under a state supplemental
20 income benefits program, judicial order or alternative sentencing program by performing
21 work on a farm or food processing facility through participation in the network under this
22 subsection.

23 **2. Educational marketing campaign.** The department shall coordinate with the
24 University of Maine Cooperative Extension, the Maine Community College System, the
25 Department of Labor, the Department of Education, the Department of Health and
26 Human Services and the Department of Economic and Community Development to
27 conduct an educational marketing campaign to promote food self-sufficiency by
28 encouraging the public to grow gardens, raise farm animals, preserve garden-grown food
29 and engage in other local food cultivation initiatives through the use of multiple media
30 including social media, radio advertising, posters, brochures and publicly accessible
31 department websites.

32 **3. Local purchases for food programs.** If the department, as part of a public-
33 private partnership, purchases food for an emergency or supplemental food program for
34 elderly or low-income persons, the department to the extent practicable shall purchase
35 food that is grown, harvested, prepared, processed or produced in the State.

36 **4. Regulation of local food by ordinance.** Notwithstanding any provision of law to
37 the contrary, pursuant to home rule granted by the Constitution of Maine, Article VIII,
38 Part Second and the provisions of Title 30-A, section 3001 and in accordance with the
39 policies of the State encouraging food self-sufficiency as described in Title 7-A, section
40 201-A, a municipality may regulate by ordinance the direct producer-to-customer
41 exchange of all food grown, harvested, prepared, processed or produced in the
42 municipality.

5. Existing resources. The department shall use existing programs and resources to the extent possible in carrying out the purposes of this section.

SUMMARY

This bill directs the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, in coordination with various state agencies, to develop and administer an agricultural jobs network linking farms and facilities that process agricultural products grown in the State with available workers who are involved in farming or a local food industry or who are required to perform community service and to develop an educational marketing campaign to promote food self-sufficiency by encouraging the public to grow gardens, to raise farm animals and to preserve garden-grown food. This bill also requires the department, to the extent practicable, to purchase food grown, harvested, prepared, processed or produced in the State when purchasing food for an emergency or supplemental food program for elderly or low-income persons.