

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2021

Legislative Document

No. 691

H.P. 503

House of Representatives, March 4, 2021

An Act To Support Farms and Address Food Insecurity

Received by the Clerk of the House on March 2, 2021. 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.
Cosponsored by Representatives: McCREA of Fort Fairfield, O'NEIL of Saco, TALBOT ROSS of Portland, Senators: BRENNER of Cumberland, DILL of Penobscot, MAXMIN of Lincoln.

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

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

3 **§219-A. Fund To Address Food Insecurity and Provide Nutrition Incentives**

4 **1. Fund established.** The Fund To Address Food Insecurity and Provide Nutrition
5 Incentives, referred to in this section as "the fund," is established in the department to
6 provide incentives to federal food and nutrition assistance program participants for the
7 purchase of locally grown fruits and vegetables and to support outreach for and
8 administration of programs that offer nutrition incentives to participants of federal food and
9 nutrition assistance programs. The fund is established to match contributions from private
10 and public sources of up to \$50,000 annually to further the purposes of this section. The
11 fund, to be accounted within the department, must be held separate and apart from all other
12 money, funds and accounts. Eligible investment earnings credited to the assets of the fund
13 become part of the assets of the fund. Any unexpended balances remaining in the fund at
14 the end of any fiscal year do not lapse and must be carried forward to the next fiscal year.
15 For purposes of this section, "local" means within the State.

16 **2. Fund recipients.** An organization based in the State that supports local food
17 producers, local food production or low-income individuals in receiving food and nutrition
18 assistance may receive proceeds from the fund upon application with the department. The
19 department shall prioritize an applicant that has a demonstrated history of incentivizing the
20 use of federal food and nutrition assistance programs to purchase locally grown fruits and
21 vegetables or that demonstrates the ability to leverage the proceeds to match or receive
22 additional funds from local, state, federal or private sources. The department shall
23 periodically post a request for applications for eligible organizations to apply for fund
24 proceeds.

25 **3. Report; audit.** The department shall require a periodic report from a recipient
26 under subsection 2 detailing the use of fund proceeds and the federal food and nutrition
27 assistance programs involved and to ensure that the funds are expended appropriately
28 pursuant to this section. The department may audit a recipient to carry out the purposes of
29 this subsection.

30 **4. Rules.** The department may adopt routine technical rules as defined in Title 5,
31 chapter 375, subchapter 2-A to carry out the purposes of the fund, including application
32 criteria and procedures for recipients, disbursement of funds to recipients and for outreach
33 and administration purposes and reporting and audit procedures for recipients.

34 **Sec. 2. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and
35 allocations are made.

36 **AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY, DEPARTMENT OF**

37 **Fund To Address Food Insecurity and Provide Nutrition Incentives**

38 Initiative: Provides funding to capitalize the Fund To Address Food Insecurity and Provide
39 Nutrition Incentives to be used to match contributions from private and public sources.

40 GENERAL FUND	2021-22	2022-23
41 All Other	\$50,000	\$50,000
42	_____	_____

1 GENERAL FUND TOTAL \$50,000 \$50,000
2

3 **SUMMARY**

4 This bill establishes the Fund To Address Food Insecurity and Provide Nutrition
5 Incentives within the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to provide
6 incentives to federal food and nutrition assistance program participants for the purchase of
7 locally grown fruits and vegetables and to support outreach for and administration of
8 programs that offer nutrition incentives to participants of federal food and nutrition
9 assistance programs. The fund will match contributions from private and public sources of
10 up to \$50,000 annually. Fund recipients must be state-based organizations that support
11 local food producers, local food production or low-income individuals in receiving food
12 and nutrition assistance, with priority given to organizations that have a demonstrated
13 history of incentivizing the use of federal food and nutrition assistance programs to
14 purchase locally grown fruits and vegetables or that demonstrate the ability to leverage the
15 proceeds to match or receive additional funds from local, state, federal or private sources.
16 The bill provides reporting and audit requirements for recipients to ensure proper use of
17 the funds and appropriates funds to capitalize the fund.