

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE
132ND LEGISLATURE
FIRST REGULAR AND FIRST SPECIAL SESSIONS



Disposition of bills and summaries of all laws enacted or finally passed

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY**

August 2025

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- C. Apply the provisions of the Maine Food Sovereignty Act to all local food ordinances, including those in place before that Act was enacted; and
 - D. Specify that the Maine Food Sovereignty Act does not require a specific form or framework for local food ordinances.
4. It establishes the Maine Vegetable Garden Protection Act to:
- A. Allow an individual to cultivate vegetable gardens on the individual's property or on the private property of another with the permission of the owner of that property anywhere in the State without interference;
 - B. Allow a municipality, county, village or plantation to develop and implement a program to promote permaculture and to establish edible landscaping, food forests and community gardens in public spaces, including publicly owned properties, rights-of-way, school grounds, parks and parking lots, in collaboration with local, state or regional public or private entities; and
 - C. Allow a municipality, county, village or plantation to adopt ordinances to regulate matters related to the cultivation of vegetable gardens, permaculture, edible landscaping, food forests and community gardens.
5. It requires the Maine Farms for the Future Program review panel, to the extent practicable, to give priority to applications from applicants who have a history of generational poverty or land dispossession in the United States or from applicants who are veterans.
6. It allows the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Parks and Lands to lease land and parcels of land in parks and historic sites, nonreserved public land and public reserved land for purposes of cultivating edible crops, hay or pasturage for livestock and allows the bureau to give priority consideration in establishing those leases to individuals with a history of generational poverty or land dispossession in the United States or to individuals who are veterans.
7. It clarifies that a plantation has the same powers and duties and is subject to the same restrictions as a municipality with respect to ordinances regarding traditional foodways and direct producer-to-consumer transactions under the Maine Food Sovereignty Act.

LD 130 An Act to Establish the PFAS Response Program and to Modify the Fund To Address PFAS Contamination

ENACTED LAW SUMMARY

Public Law 2025, chapter 65 requires the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to establish the PFAS Response Program for the purpose of abating, cleaning up and mitigating

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threats and hazards posed by PFAS that affect agricultural producers in the State and the food supply; providing support to affected commercial farms; supporting critical PFAS research; and allowing for the department to strategically and effectively respond to PFAS concerns and issues. The program includes establishing maximum PFAS levels in farm products in consultation with the Department of Health and Human Services, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention and, when maximum levels are being exceeded, prohibiting commercial sale of the products affected. The program may provide testing support and technical and financial assistance to PFAS-impacted producers while establishing baseline criteria for producers to adhere to for the receipt of such assistance. The program may also undertake research efforts via department staff, state agency partners or contracted third parties that inform on-farm management recommendations or regulatory decisions. The Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources within the department must administer the program. The department may adopt routine technical rules and shall report annually to the Legislature about the program's activities.

The law modifies the Fund To Address PFAS Contamination by authorizing the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to sell, grant, lease, transfer or otherwise convey any real or personal property acquired under its existing authority to buy and sell agricultural land found to be contaminated by PFAS, and to deposit the proceeds of such transactions into the Fund To Address PFAS Contamination. Additionally, the law updates the requirement that the Advisory Committee on the Fund To Address PFAS Contamination hold two hearings annually to require one public meeting annually. The law also requires that the cochairs of the advisory committee must be elected by the advisory committee's members.

The law also specifies that health care information obtained by the department in the course of providing access to health services under its existing authority must be treated as confidential.

LD 261 An Act Regarding the Authority of Municipalities to Regulate Timber Harvesting

ENACTED LAW SUMMARY

Public Law 2025, chapter 274 provides that a municipal timber harvesting ordinance adopted on or after January 1, 2026 must meet the process requirements of the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 12, section 8869, subsection 8. The law provides that a municipal timber harvesting ordinance may be adopted only after certification by the bureau that the municipality adopted the timber harvesting ordinance in accordance with the process requirements. Municipal ordinances subject to review by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Forestry are limited to ordinances that regulate timber harvesting activities.