



# SIERRA CLUB

## MAINE CHAPTER

PO Box 1374  
Yarmouth, ME 04096  
Phone: (207) 761-5616  
[www.sierraclub.org/maine](http://www.sierraclub.org/maine)

To: Committee on Environment and Natural Resources

From: Sarah Fitzpatrick - Sierra Club Maine

Date: April 29, 2021

Re: Testimony in Support of L.D. 1540 **An Act To Reduce Hunger and Use Food Scraps in Farming and Energy Production**

---

Members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, my name is Sarah Fitzpatrick and I am a resident of North Yarmouth. I write today as a stay-at-home mom and volunteer with Sierra Club Maine, representing their over 22,000 supporters and members statewide. We voice our support and urge you to vote “Ought to Pass” for this legislation: LD 1540 An Act To Reduce Hunger and Use Food Scraps in Farming and Energy Production.

It is irresponsible that [13.6%](#) of Mainers suffer from food insecurity and yet 40% of Maine’s food is wasted. Food dumped in landfills releases harmful greenhouse gases into our atmosphere. [That wasted food already has an environmental impact before it reaches consumer’s hands](#). America’s agriculture industry accounts for 10% of the nation’s total energy use, 50% of land use, and 80% of freshwater consumption. Agriculture also contributes to water & air pollution, plus the negative impacts of packaging and transporting produce. When food is sent to the landfill or incinerator, we not only waste that food but all of the resources that went into its production.

Mainers experience food insecurity at a greater rate than the national average (11.1%). This rate has only increased in the previous year due to the stress of the pandemic.

Symptoms of food insecurity costs exceed \$200 billion annually; [health-related complications](#), lost economic productivity, education costs, charity, and [government assistance programs](#). More than 78,000 [Maine households](#) (144,000 individuals) are currently enrolled in SNAP.

Food Insecurity disproportionately affects Black and Hispanic American households more than twice the frequency as white households.

Reducing hunger and reusing food scraps are achievable goals that will help Maine reach its climate goals. Hannaford has demonstrated this type of program is achievable through its [sustainable business](#) practice of diverting food at risk of going to waste from the landfill to food banks and partnering with AgriCycle in Scarborough. In 2020, Hannaford prevented 65 million pounds of food waste from reaching landfills.

[This excessive and unsustainable amount of food waste is a real tragedy for both our environment and our people.](#) These two problems can be solved simultaneously with LD 1540 An Act To Reduce Hunger and Use Food Scraps in Farming and Energy Production.

Thank you Representative Zeigler for presenting this legislation. We ask the Committee to vote ought-to-pass on LD 1540.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Fitzpatrick

Sierra Club Maine Legislative Volunteer