



Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association

Common Ground Country Fair

Testimony In Support of LD 1099

**An Act To Establish a Fund for the Operations and Outreach Activities of the University of
Maine Cooperative Extension Animal and Plant Disease and Insect Control Laboratory
April 16, 2015**

Good afternoon Senator Edgecomb, Representative Hickman and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. My name is Heather Spalding and I'm the Deputy Director of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA). Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

MOFGA has nearly 11,000 members and our family members are committed to MOFGA's mission. Our families love what MOFGA does, the organic farmers who grow their food and they want to protect all Maine children from exposure to pesticides.

The Animal and Plant Disease and Insect Control Fund will be a tremendous help to Cooperative Extension. It will greatly expand Extension's ability to carry out critical work on pesticide safety and minimize Maine's reliance on harmful pesticides.

Cuts to Cooperative Extension's budget happen year after year after year. And this fund concept comes up Legislature after Legislature after Legislature.

The language has been crafted to address each and every concern that opponents have brought up over decades of debate. It is not a burden on manufacturers. It is not a burden on small retailers. It is not a burden on consumers.

Let's do this. It's a simple and effective way to generate revenue for the invaluable extension staff in Maine.

Thank you very much for your consideration.