

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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One Hundred and Twenty-Eighth Legislature
State of Maine

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First Regular Session
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Reference was made to Bill "An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2018 and June 30, 2019" (EMERGENCY)

(H.P. 281) (L.D. 390)

In reference to the action of the House on June 28, 2017 whereby it Insisted and Asked for a Second Committee of Conference, the Chair appoints the following members on the part of the House as Conferees:

Speaker GIDEON of Freeport

Representative FREY of Bangor

Representative WINSOR of Norway

The SPEAKER: Announcement from the Chair. We're going to have an announcement period right now, and we're waiting for a veto to come out and be distributed. If that comes out during this time, we'll go ahead and run that, and if not, I think we'll just let folks go tonight and do it in the morning. So I just want to give folks a sense of what to expect coming up here. So tomorrow we are going to come into session, both the Senate and the House; we're coming into session at 10 a.m. tomorrow. I do not expect us to have a tremendous amount of work to do but we do have some. We will have a couple of things to do; and I want to give people advanced notice that, additionally, something that will be on there is another extension of five days of legislative session in order for us to pass a biennial budget this year. On that note, I think everyone, probably, either through conversations or caucuses or conversations with leaders knows that we -- and also through our actions today, the Committee of Conference that had been appointed for the past ten days voted out to reappoint a new Committee of Conference to continue work on the budget, and the reality is that in order to have a biennial budget in place for fiscal years '18 and '19 by the time the current one expires, on Friday night, we would need to have an agreement in place and be sending that agreement to OFPR tomorrow, so that we could vote on the budget on Friday. So what I want folks to know and expect is that Friday will likely be a very long day. We will be voting on a budget on Friday and we would need to run it all the way through both bodies, which takes a lot of time because it's a big, big document; and then we would be in a posture where we are waiting for the Chief Executive to either sign or veto, according to his preference, a bill, if we are able to pass a bill. That being said, folks should expect a very long day Friday, possibly into Saturday, so I want people to be expecting that that could happen; or coming back on Saturday. However, if we are not successful in passing a budget, folks should expect that we will be here every day until we pass a budget, and should make plans, or not make plans, accordingly moving ahead. I just want to give people a realistic expectation. I am very hopeful, and I think all legislative leaders are working hard and will be working all night to try to get that agreement and deliver a budget that people in this chamber, no matter where in the state they come from or what their affiliation, can feel they can vote for. I am going to be in my office. I am happy to have any visitors or any conversations in person, or via phone, at any time should people have questions about what is happening, about what the status is, or about what will happen. On that note, I don't have anything else for you but announcements from the floor.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Burlington, Representative Turner, who wishes to address the House on the record.

Representative **TURNER**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. May I ask a question?

The SPEAKER: The Representative may proceed.

Representative **TURNER**: Thank you. I was just wondering, when you said we have to be here every day, does that include Saturday, Sunday, and the holiday through?

The SPEAKER: The Chair would answer in the affirmative. As long as there is not a biennial budget in place for the State of Maine, the state will not be operating and we will be working around-the-clock until a budget is in place.

Representative **TURNER**: Thank you for that clarification.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Following Communication: (H.C. 296)

**STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
1 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0001**

June 28, 2017

The 128th Legislature of the State of Maine

State House

Augusta, Maine

Dear Honorable Members of the 128th Legislature:

Under the authority vested in me by Article IV, Part Third, Section 2 of the Constitution of the State of Maine, I am hereby vetoing LD 835, "An Act To Promote Small Diversified Farms and Small Food Producers."

Contrary to the title, this bill alters definitions in state law, which will cause an unhealthy impact on Maine food production. Consumers and farmers will both be left wondering which items are really safe Maine food products. LD 835 is an effort to legislate an illusion that there is no need for food safety training and inspections. The overwhelming majority of Maine food producers and processors successfully use the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF) licensing and educational expertise to improve the safety and value of their products.

To participate in the existing licensing process, food producers, especially new farmers and processors, work closely with the technical experts at DACF and the University of Maine Cooperative Extension to understand the chemical and biological hazards that surround food preparation. LD 835 allows a wide exemption to safe food inspections.

Passage of this bill adds a tracking requirement for DACF professional staff to trace which producers are not required to meet state food safety standards based on farm location, point of sale and volume of product. Rather than ensuring safe food for all consumers, DACF would have to determine who must meet safe food license requirements and who is not required to produce food following food safety procedures.

Currently the Center for Disease Control is investigating multiple outbreaks of salmonella that have sickened 400 people. The most common cause is lack of safe procedures for handling backyard chickens, chicks and eggs. These same foods are specifically exempted within the proposed legislation. The Center for Disease Control warns that just looking healthy "does not reveal whether or not products contain salmonella." Eliminating responsibility for food safety without any requirement for standards equal to known safety tolerance is dangerous to consumers, a risky burden to towns and