The 128th Legislature of the State of Maine  
State House  
Augusta, ME  

Dear Honorable Members of the 128th Legislature:  


Under current Maine law, the Executive branch is authorized to work with the Federal government and form cooperative agreements where state agencies get paid by the federal government to implement federal rules and laws. This works well because state agencies have a better understanding about the needs of Maine citizens and businesses than the federal government. This bill will drastically change this process by stripping this authority from the Executive branch and giving it to the Legislature.  

If this bill goes into law, there are many programs that could be negatively impacted. Some of these programs require frequent approvals of updated industry supported standards. How will the Legislature be able to keep up with these changes when they are in session for only part of the year? This bill could easily add years to programs to process, which could cost Maine industries millions of dollars in lost revenue.  

For a long time the state has had successful cooperative agreements with many programs, including school lunch inspections, milk and dairy, forestry, potatoes, eggs and fruit and vegetables. Eggs and potatoes alone have at least a half-billion-dollar impact on the Maine economy, which is especially critical in struggling rural areas. There is no problem with the current system; therefore, the Legislature should not risk hurting businesses just to have a little more power.  

For this reason, I return LD 23 unsigned and vetoed. I strongly urge the Legislature to sustain it.  

Sincerely,  

[Signature]  
Paul R. LePage  
Governor