23 June 2017

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

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 1203, “An Act To Increase Transparency in Cooperative Agreements within the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.”

This bill amends the law governing Cooperative Agreements (CA) and arrangements entered into by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry for the purpose of controlling diseases of plants and domestic animals and advertising or disseminating information concerning Maine food products.

Adding legislative committee reporting requirements and oversight to the Cooperative Agreements between the State of Maine and the federal government is unnecessary and overly bureaucratic. The web posting requirement creates obligations of staff time for placement and updates. Staff time is much better spent assisting producers than on maintaining a document site.

An additional concern is the limited information contained in the documents. There are many additional factors, history and benefits of each agreement that do not enter the actual agreement yet are part of the consideration.

It is important to recognize that Cooperative Agreements are often the result of requests from Maine businesses and growers to increase marketability of Maine products. For example, potato and egg quality inspections now covered by Cooperative Agreements facilitate the sale of Maine products throughout the U.S. and international markets.

Although the intent of this legislation may be to provide relief from federal regulations, it only adds to the cost of state government and would be a time burden to staff that would be better spent assisting growers.

For these reasons, I return LD 1203 unsigned and vetoed. I strongly urge the Legislature to sustain it.

Sincerely,

Paul R. LePage
Governor