

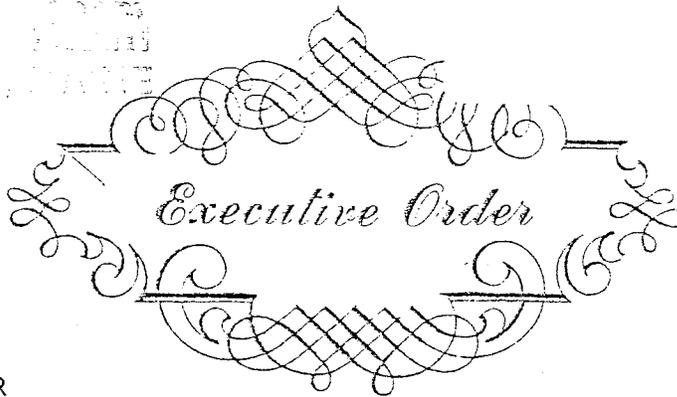
MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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NO. 9FY 79/80
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MAINE'S RURAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND PRIORITIES

WHEREAS, small Maine communities have accounted for 70% of the State's population growth over the past decade;

WHEREAS, these same small towns have also experienced new demands on public facilities and services and frequently lack the tax base necessary to provide these facilities and services;

WHEREAS, employment and income growth have not kept pace with development causing further disparities between service needs and financial resources;

WHEREAS, much of the State's substandard housing, poverty level families and low income elderly reside in rural Maine and such families need better job training, public transportation, medical and human services;

WHEREAS, the agricultural economy is essential to the economic base of many small towns and needs assistance if it is to maintain its vitality;

WHEREAS, energy and natural resource development are also critical to rural development in areas such as agriculture, housing and economic improvement;

WHEREAS, small businesses help form the backbone of the State's rural economy and need to be promoted and assisted; and

WHEREAS, State and Federal programs and actions having a significant impact on rural development need to be guided by clear policies and priorities in order to assist local development efforts and to address identified rural issues in a coordinated and concerted manner;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOSEPH E. BRENNAN, Governor of the State of Maine, do hereby order that the major goals for rural development in Maine are to:

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MAINE'S RURAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND PRIORITIES

- The aims of rural and small town development are to improve the life of rural people by stimulating increased employment opportunities and greater income, preserving and enhancing the agricultural economy, increasing access to services and facilities which fulfill the essential needs of rural people, and extending these benefits particularly to individuals and groups of people who have not shared in them previously.
- To achieve these aims, federal, state and local governments should cooperate fully to eliminate duplication, gaps, conflicting procedures and actions, and other deterrents to increased effectiveness of rural development programs. The efforts of all levels of government should include attention to the views and potential contributions of private sector groups, including business, regional, and community-based organizations.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Goal

- STIMULATE NEW JOBS AND HIGHER INCOME IN RURAL AREAS AND ESPECIALLY IN THOSE SMALL TOWNS WHICH HAVE LARGE CONCENTRATIONS OF UNEMPLOYED, UNDEREMPLOYED, AND LOW INCOME FAMILIES.

Program Priorities

- Improve the State's rural economy by stimulating community and resource based employment opportunities in such areas as wood products and renewable energy resources such as hydro-electric, wood, and gasohol.
- Support rural transportation programs which are crucial to increase rural employment, reduce commuting costs, marketing of farm products, and to conserve energy.
- Provide financial, technical and managerial assistance to small rural businesses and support rural downtown and village revitalization efforts.
- Support the formulation and implementation of locally generated community and economic development programs/priorities through joint State, Federal and regional assistance.
- Provide joint funding and assistance to package an interagency rural community development effort.

- Provide increased levels of assistance to small communities which are outside of the State's major I-95 development corridor and communities which are isolated from major economic activity and public service centers.

Goal

- PROMOTE THE STABILIZATION, PRESERVATION, AND EXPANSION OF THE STATE'S FARMING, FISHING, AND WOOD PRODUCTS INDUSTRY.

Program Priorities

- Work jointly to protect the State's important agricultural lands from urban and suburban encroachment through such tools as A-95 review and the FmHA state resource management planning process.
- Enhance and stimulate family farms, limited resource farmers and small farm enterprises through such means as financial and technical assistance to production and marketing cooperatives.
- Assist in expanding both the domestic and foreign markets for Maine's agricultural and resource based products.
- Develop alternatives in the transportation of farm inputs and products.
- Support and promote alternative energy usage in agriculture and assist in developing energy resources utilizing forestry and agricultural by-products.
- Support programs and new farm enterprises leading to greater food self-sufficiency for Maine people.

Goal

- PROVIDE ADEQUATE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO RURAL RESIDENTS OF ALL INCOMES, PARTICULARLY THE LOW INCOME, AND ASSIST IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK.

Program Priorities

- Support the repair and weatherization of the State's existing housing stock emphasizing such assistance to low income elderly and family units.

- Gain the approval and use of alternative energy and conservation techniques in existing and new homes with an emphasis on wood, solar, insulation, and the development of new energy efficient home designs.
- Place more emphasis on meeting the housing needs of low income families.
- Locate new housing near existing or proposed employment and public service centers consistent with local plans and sound development and energy conservation practices.
- Initiate efforts to provide joint Federal and State resources in support of congregate elderly housing.

Goal

- PROVIDE GREATER ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES FOR RURAL RESIDENTS.

Program Priorities

- Assist communities which have problems with municipal water systems or which have difficulty in meeting the standards of the National Safe Drinking Water Act.
- Support programs aimed at addressing rural health care needs with an emphasis on targeting assistance to state identified medically underserved areas.
- Provide public facilities and services to meet the needs of existing residents and businesses prior to planning for new capacity to accommodate new growth.

Goal

- PROMOTE PARTICIPATION OF OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN THE STATE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROCESS AND ASSURE THAT RURAL DEVELOPMENT IS BALANCED WITH THE NEEDS OF URBAN COMMUNITIES.

Program Priorities

- Involve communities in the planning for and allocation of federal and state development and assistance programs and work with regional organizations to assist communities in packaging joint funding efforts.

- Utilize, to the maximum extent possible, plans and strategies developed by communities or regional plans developed with the support of communities.

Goal

- ELIMINATE AND PREVENT FUTURE DUPLICATION, COMPETITION, AND CONFLICTING ACTIONS AMONG AND BETWEEN AGENCIES AND ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT TO PROMOTE EFFICIENCY IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM DELIVERY.

Program Priorities

- Encourage the formation of district level technical advisory committees working with the regional planning and economic development organizations.
- Freely exchange information concerning State/Federal programs, funding levels, social and economic information, resource allocation plans and other pertinent data.
- Ensure that the FmHA and other related Federal agencies will be notified of and asked to participate in the State's business and community assistance efforts and programs.