

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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(EMERGENCY)
FIRST REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND NINTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 321

S. P. 139

In Senate, February 6, 1979

Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs. Sent down for concurrence and ordered printed.

Presented by Senator Perkins of Hancock.

Cosponsor: Senator Chapman of Sagadahoc.

MAY M. ROSS, Secretary of the Senate

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-NINE

**AN ACT Providing for Archaeological Investigation of the "Viking Coin"
Historical Site.**

Emergency preamble. Whereas, Acts of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, there has been discovered at a Maine Indian archaeological site an artifact of international importance, a Viking era coin dated to the period of 1060 to 1080; and

Whereas, this discovery brings international attention to the site and subjects it to unlawful looting, vandalism and plundering; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine, as follows:

Appropriation. The following funds shall be appropriated from the General Fund to carry out the purposes of this Act.

	1979-80	1980-81
EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF		
State Museum Bureau		
Personal Services	(2) \$27,783	(2) \$14,571

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this Act shall take effect when approved.

STATEMENT OF FACT

A collection of over 10,000 archaeological artifacts was donated to the State Museum Bureau in 1974. These artifacts had been excavated at a site on Blue Hill bay in the early 1960's by an amateur archaeologist. A small coin from this collection has recently been indentified by leading scholars as being a Norse coin minted in the 11th century—the earliest European artifact ever recovered in the United States. This find potentially sheds new light on Norse exploration of North America and the state's unique role in early history. It has, thereby, become the subject of international interest. The State Museum Bureau and the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, which share responsibilities for the study and care of the state's heritage, are developing a program to protect the significant historic site where the coin was found, provide futher professional excavation of the site and analyze the thousands of artifacts already in the museum's possession. Funds provided in this bill will be matched by federal funds administered by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and will provide, jointly, for the materials, professional staff and field crews essential to the project.