

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FIRST REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND TENTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 236

S. P. 106

In Senate, January 14, 1981

Referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Sent down for concurrence and ordered printed.

MAY M. ROSS, Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator McBreairty of Aroostook.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-ONE

AN ACT to Amend the Statutory Limit on Phosphorus in Detergents.

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

38 MRSA § 419, sub-§ 1, ¶C, as enacted by PL 1971, c. 544, § 128, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

C. "High phosphorus detergent," as used in this section, means any detergent, presoak, soap, enzyme or other cleaning agent containing more than 8.7% phosphorus by weight and more than 7 grams of phosphorus in any quantity of the detergent recommended on the product package or label for use in a household washing machine.

STATEMENT OF FACT

Maine law currently bans the sale or use of detergents and other cleaning agents containing more than 8.7% phosphorus by weight. As applied to most laundry detergent products, this percentage limitation is equivalent to approximately 7 grams or less of phosphorus in each household use of the product. Concentrated laundry detergent products have recently been developed, which contain more than 8.7% phosphorus by weight, but require the use of only ¼ cup of detergent per washload as opposed to the 1 to 1¼ cup required when a conventional detergent is used. A typical use of such a concentrated detergent will contain no more phosphorus than is contained in a typical use of a conventional detergent.

Consumers will not use more than the recommended amounts because to do so would make the product unduly expensive. Since these concentrated detergents contain more than 8.7% phosphorus by weight, they cannot now be sold in Maine, although they will not actually put more phosphorus in Maine's Waterways and aquifers than the phosphate detergents that can be sold here. This bill would amend the laws so as to allow the sale of these products. It would not result in any increase in the amount of phosphorus released in waste water.