

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the
LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from scanned originals with text recognition applied
(searchable text may contain some errors and/or omissions)

Review of the Maine State Planning Office under the Government
Evaluation Act

<p style="text-align:center">JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT</p>
--

Review of the Maine State Planning Office under the Government Evaluation Act

The Government Evaluation Act

The Government Evaluation Act (“Act”) provides for a system of periodic review of the efficacy and performance of state government agencies. The review of an agency’s finances and programs must include a review of agency management and organization, program delivery, goals and objectives, statutory mandates and fiscal accountability. (3 MRSA § 951 et seq.) The law was enacted in the 117th Legislature to replace the former Government Audit and Program Review Committee and substituted a legislative audit of each agency on a rotating basis with an agency self assessment.

The focus of the Act is the agency program evaluation report that consists of a number of components required by the statute. Essentially, the report is an agency self-assessment that the committee of jurisdiction uses as a starting point for its evaluation of the agency’s effectiveness, efficiency and performance. The components that must be included in the report are: the agency’s enabling state and federal legislation; program descriptions; organizational structure, position count and job classifications; compliance with federal and state health and safety laws; ten-year financial summaries; regulatory agenda; coordinated efforts with other state agencies; constituencies served by the agency; alternative delivery systems; and emerging issues for the agency.

Review Process

In May of 2001, the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government notified the State Planning Office of its intent to review the agency pursuant to the schedule established in section 959 of Title 3. The State Planning Office submitted its program evaluation report on November 1, 2001.

On January 9, 2002, the State Planning Office presented its Program Evaluation Report to the committee at a public hearing. Members of the public were given time to comment after the presentation. The committee received numerous letters of support of the State Planning Office from several organizations and individuals. The State and Local Government Committee did not hold any follow-up meetings after the State Planning Office’s presentation.

Findings and Recommendation

The Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government has reviewed the Maine State Planning Office and finds that it is operating within its statutory authority. The State Planning Office was established 33 years ago provide “arms-length” analyses to assist decision-makers in

establishing policies for Maine's economy, natural resources and governance. The SPO has four statutory duties: to forecast economic conditions, balance conservation and development of natural resources, provide planning assistance to towns and regions, and to provide technical assistance to the Governor and Legislature. Detailed information about the SPO can be found in the SPO's Program Evaluation Report, which meets the criteria set in statute. (3 MRSA §956)

The Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government finds that the Maine State Planning Office is operating within its statutory authority. We recommend that the State Planning Office be reviewed again in 5 years. The Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government will be reporting out a bill to establish the next report dates for all agencies reviewed by the committee during this and other recent sessions.