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STATE OF MAINE

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

March 22, 2010

The Honorable Elizabeth H. Mitchell
President of the Senate
The Honorable Hannah M. Pingree
Speaker of the House of Representatives
124th Legislature
State House
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Madam President and Madam Speaker:

Pursuant to Title 3 Maine Revised Statutes, chapter 35, we are pleased to submit the findings of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry from the review and evaluation of the Baxter State Park Authority under the State Government Evaluation Act. In its review, the Committee found that the Authority is operating within its statutory authority.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Senator John M. Nutting.

Senator John M. Nutting
Senate Chair

Handwritten signature of Representative Wendy Pieh.

Representative Wendy Pieh
House Chair

cc: Alec Giffen, Director of the Bureau of Forestry
R. Dan Martin, Commissioner of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
Janet Mills, Attorney General
Jensen Bissell, Director of Baxter State Park Authority
Patrick Norton, Director, Office of Policy and Legal Analysis

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY**

**Review of the Baxter State Park Authority
Under the Government Evaluation Act
March 2010**

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. (3 MRSA § 951 et seq.) The keystone to the Act is the agency program evaluation report, which consists of a number of components required by the statute. Essentially, the report is an agency self-assessment, which the committee of jurisdiction uses as a starting point for its evaluation of the agency’s effectiveness, efficiency and performance.

Review Process

In June of 2009, the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture Conservation and Forestry notified the Baxter State Park Authority of its intent to review the Authority during the Second Session of the 124th Legislature. The Authority submitted its program evaluation report as required under 3 MRSA §956 in November of 2009.

On January 29, 2010, Alec Giffen, Director of the Maine Forest Service and Chair of the Baxter State Park Authority, and Janet Mills, Maine’s Attorney General and member of the Authority, presented the Authority’s Program Evaluation Report to the committee. The third member of the Authority, Dan Martin, Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, was unable to attend.

Jensen Bissell, the Director of Baxter State Park, was present and answered questions pertaining to the parks’ endowment, harvesting in the Scientific Forest Management Area (SFMA) and trends in use of the park. He explained recent changes in the fee structure and reservation system. Alec Giffen spoke of additional recreational opportunities in the park with acquisition of the Katahdin Lake parcel.

Findings and Recommendation

The Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry finds the report presented by the Baxter State Park Authority is thorough in addressing the essential elements for self assessment under the Government Evaluation Act. The Authority is responsibly carrying out its unique mission of operating and maintaining the park in accordance with the Trust created by Percival Baxter and the reiteration of Governor Baxter’s expressed objectives for the park in Title 12, Section 900. The Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry recommends that the Baxter State Park Authority be reviewed again under the Government Evaluation Act in 2017.