

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

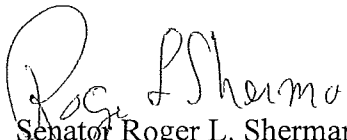
March 12, 2012

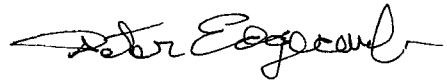
The Honorable Kevin L. Raye
President of the Senate
The Honorable Robert W. Nutting
Speaker of the House of Representatives
125th Legislature
State House
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Mr. President and Mr. 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 Department of Conservation under the State Government Evaluation Act. In its review, the Committee found that the Department is operating within its statutory authority.

Sincerely,


Senator Roger L. Sherman
Senate Chair


Representative Peter E. Edgecomb
House Chair

cc: William Beardsley, Commissioner, Department of Conservation
Marion Hylan Barr, Director, Office of Policy and Legal Analysis

Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Review of the Department of Conservation under the Government Evaluation Act March 2012

The Government Evaluation Act

The Government Evaluation Act provides for a system of periodic review of the efficacy and performance of state government agencies (3 MRSA §951 et seq). The keystone of the Act is the agency's program evaluation report that 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 May of 2011, the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry notified the Department of Conservation of its intent to review the department pursuant to the schedule established in 3 MRSA, §959. The Department submitted its program evaluation report as requested by November 1, 2011.

On January 17, 2012, Commissioner Beardsley and Deputy Commissioner Jack Nicholas presented the report to the committee at a public meeting. A second meeting was held on January 26, 2012 with other department bureau directors present to respond to questions from the committee.

Findings and Recommendation

The report prepared by the Department of Conservation is comprehensive and meets the requirements under the Government Evaluation Act. Since receiving the report, LD 1830, An Act to Establish the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, has been referred to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. A Public Hearing on this bill is scheduled for March 13, 2012 with a work session or sessions to follow. LD 1830 proposes the merger of two departments overseen by this committee. The information provided in the GEA report will be useful as we examine the mission and responsibilities of the various bureaus within the department and discuss the advisability of a merger with the Department of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Resources.

In deference to consideration of the Governor's proposal in LD 1830, the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry is making no recommendations at this time regarding changes to the Department of Conservation.