

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Bill Ellis (3296)
October 6, 1972

AUGUSTA -- Governor Curtis today announced the formation of a Cabinet Committee for Research and Development to stimulate the advance and application of the science and technology needed by Maine.

The Governor pointed out that few, if any, states spend less than Maine on science and technology. He cited a Congressional analysis showing that although Maine had

- .51% of the U. S. population, received
- .42% of the personal income, and paid
- .28% of the Federal taxes, it received only
- .03% of the Federal Research and Development Budget

less than any other state.

He also noted that an article from Fortune magazine indicated that none of the 842 members of the prestigious National Academy of Sciences live in Maine and only .01% of all U.S. Research scientists are Maine residents.

"Maine can no longer afford to let its brains flow out of the State or be attracted by projects of no value to Maine," Governor Curtis said.

"The lack of research and development in Maine is not in itself of concern. What is important is the solution of Maine's problems and the development of Maine's potentials. Scientists in Massachusetts and California are developing ways to raise lobsters; laboratories in Texas are experimenting with techniques for making paper from grasses

without the use of water; wood may become the resource for a substantial chemical industry; Maine seaweeds might be used in pharmaceuticals; and new ways must be found to solve Maine's environmental problems," Governor Curtis said.

The new Cabinet Committee, composed of Commissioners of major State Departments, will attempt to identify areas of science of special interest to Maine and to stimulate relevant research projects.

Other states have established new State Research Agencies or Science Foundations run by scientists outside State government. By establishing a Committee within his Cabinet, the Governor has eliminated the necessity for independent programs in different State agencies, made certain that State research projects will be on topics of value to the State, and provided a mechanism to ascertain that the results of research will be put rapidly into action.

Governor Curtis said a first task of the new Committee will be to identify existing State and Federal funds which can be used to support Maine research projects. Federal R. & D. funds are again rapidly increasing and will this year reach \$17,791,000,000. Past studies have shown that the distribution of these funds among states is closely related to the funds spent by the states themselves. Maine is currently the only state with no clearly identifiable state agency funds supporting science and technology. The Cabinet Committee's early deliberations should determine the extent to which the next Legislature might be called upon to establish a Maine Research Fund.

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(Attached is the Proclamation)