

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND FOURTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 1358

S. P. 405

In Senate, March 12, 1969

Referred to Committee on Business Legislation. Sent down for concurrence and 1,000 ordered printed.

JERROLD B. SPEERS, Secretary

Presented by Senator Mills of Franklin.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
SIXTY-NINE

AN ACT Establishing a Consumers' Council.

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

Sec. 1. R. S., T. 10, c. 212, additional. Title 10 of the Revised Statutes is amended by adding a new chapter 212, to read as follows:

CHAPTER 212

CONSUMERS' COUNCIL

§ 1361. Membership

There is created a Consumers' Council, hereinafter in this chapter called the "council", consisting of 8 members to be appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Council, for terms concurrent with that of the Governor, one of whom shall be a member of a union affiliated with the AFL-CIO and no more than 5 of whom shall be members of the same major political party, and ex officio, the Attorney General, the Chairman of the Public Utilities Commission, the Bank Commissioner, the Insurance Commissioner and the Commissioner of Labor and Industry. The chairman of the council shall be designated by the Governor from time to time. Said members shall serve without compensation, but shall receive their expenses necessarily incurred in the performance of their duties. The council shall meet monthly and at other times at the call of the chairman.

§ 1362. Duties

The council shall conduct studies, investigations and research and advise the executive and legislative branches in matters affecting consumer interests, coordinate consumers' services carried on by departments and agencies,

further consumer education, inform the public, through appearances before federal and state committee, commission or department hearings, or otherwise, of such policies, decisions or legislation as are beneficial or detrimental to consumers, inform the Governor and the Attorney General and other law enforcement agencies of such violations of laws or regulations affecting consumers as its investigations or studies may reveal, and study and report all matters referred to it by the Legislature or the Governor. The council may appear, through its chairman or a member or person designated by him, or through the Attorney General, for and in behalf of the people of the State before boards, commissioners, commissions, departments or agencies of the State in any hearing or matter affecting the rights of the consuming public or in any proceeding seeking the curtailment of transportation services or an increase of rates or costs of services or commodities, and shall be deemed an aggrieved party for the purpose of judicial or administrative review of any decision or ruling in any such proceedings in which it has so appeared, any other provision of law to the contrary notwithstanding. The council may appoint an executive secretary who shall not be subject to the Personnel Law, and shall, with the approval of the Governor and Council, fix his salary. The council may appoint such other assistants, consultants, investigators and experts as it deems necessary to carry out this chapter. Said council shall be provided with offices in the State House or elsewhere in the City of Augusta. It may call upon any department, board, commission or officer of the State or of any political subdivision of the State for such information as it may desire in the course of its duties.

§ 1363. Public hearings; rules

The council may hold public hearings and shall establish rules of procedure governing the conduct of its hearings which shall be made available in printed form to each witness prior to his testimony. Witnesses shall have the right to be represented by counsel and shall before testifying be sworn. The Governor may request of the Attorney General such legal assistance as may be necessary in carrying out the duties and functions of the council.

Sec. 2. Appropriation. There is appropriated from the General Fund the sum of \$49,250 to carry out the purposes of this Act. The breakdown shall be as follows:

	1969-70	1970-71
CONSUMERS' COUNCIL		
Personal Services	(2) \$16,000	(2) \$20,000
All Other	5,000	7,000
Capital Expenditures	750	500
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	\$21,750	\$27,500