

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ONE HUNDRED AND SEVENTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 949

H. P. 778

House of Representatives, March 6, 1975

On Motion of Mr. Finemore of Bridgewater, referred to the Committee on Taxation. Sent up for concurrence and ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Mr. Doak of Rangeley.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-FIVE

AN ACT to Establish the Maine Forestry District Fire Protection Fund.

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

Sec. 1. 12 MRSA c. 215, sub-c. X, as amended, is repealed.

Sec. 2. 12 MRSA c. 215, sub-c. X-A is enacted to read:

SUBCHAPTER X-A

FIRE PROTECTION FUND

§ 1611. Establishment of Maine Forestry District Fire Protection Fund

There is established the Maine Forestry District Fire Protection Fund, which shall be used to protect from fire the forests situated within the Maine Forestry District, and to pay expenses incidental thereto, including payment of wages of clerks in the bureau's offices, and for no other purpose.

§ 1612. Payments into the fund

The Fire Protection Fund shall be funded from the General Fund as follows:

1. Unorganized territories. An amount equal to the state valuation of all property in the unorganized territories in the Maine Forestry District multiplied by $4\frac{1}{2}$ mills shall be paid into the Fire Protection Fund.

2. Other appropriation. The Legislature shall biennially appropriate to the Fire Protection Fund an amount of money which added to the revenues generated under subsection 1 is sufficient to adequately protect the forests located within the Maine Forestry District.

3. Surplus appropriated by Governor and Council. If for any reason the amount of moneys paid into the Fire Protection Fund proves insufficient in any year to properly carry out the purposes of the Fire Protection Fund, the Governor and Council may make available for those purposes, from any moneys then in the treasury not otherwise appropriated, such sum or sums of money as they may deem necessary for such purposes.

§ 1613. Expenditures of moneys in the Fire Protection Fund

Except as otherwise provided, the expenditures of forestry district funds shall be in accordance with Title 5, chapters 7, 11 and 141 to 155. These chapters shall not otherwise apply to the Maine Forestry District.

Sec. 3. Appropriation. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Bureau of Forestry the sum of \$360,000 to carry out the purposes of this Act. The breakdown shall be as follows:

	1975-76	1976-77
FORESTRY, BUREAU OF		
Maine Forestry District		
Fire Protection Fund		
All Other	\$180,000	\$180,000

FISCAL NOTE

The annual amount currently raised from municipalities by the Forestry District Tax is approximately \$213,000. This Act would repeal that tax.

STATEMENT OF FACT

This Act repeals the annual district tax levied on municipalities located in the Maine Forestry District for forest fire fighting purposes and provides that the State shall pay into a Fire Protection Fund the amount which, added to the amount appropriated on behalf of the unorganized territories, will provide adequate funds to protect the forests within the Maine Forestry District. The present Forestry District Tax levied on municipalities in the Maine Forestry District is unfair, as the tax base is too narrow. The entire state derives benefits from forests in the Maine Forestry District, and thus should pay for fire protection in those forests. This Act also provides that the mill rate used to derive the appropriation for unorganized territories shall be lowered from $8\frac{1}{2}$ to $4\frac{1}{2}$ mills.