# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

**Legislative Document** **No. 1593**

H. P. 1336 House of Representatives, April 13, 1977

On motion of Mr. Mahany of Easton, referred to the Committee on Agriculture. Sent up for concurrence and ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Mr. Spencer of Standish.

Cosponsors: Mr. Hall of Sangerville, Mr. Wilfong of Stow, Mr. Wyman of Pittsfield.

## STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED SEVENTY-SEVEN

**AN ACT to Establish the Maine Food and Farmland Study Commission.**

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

**Sec. 1. Maine Food and Farmland Study Commission.** In order to protect the food production capability of the State, to provide consumers with ready access to wholesome, locally-produced food products and to encourage greater food and agricultural self-sufficiency, there is hereby created the Maine Food and Farmland Study Commission to study the problem of conversion of farmland to other uses. The commission shall recommend to the Governor and to the 109th Legislature policies and programs to protect agricultural lands from urban encroachment and residential development by:

1. **Agricultural use of land.** Encouraging the agricultural use of land, thus contributing to the income and employment of many citizens of the State and to the Maine economy in general;

2. **Continuity of agricultural open space.** Encouraging the continuity of agricultural open space with its environmental benefits, including rural aesthetics and enhanced air and water quality; and

3. **Field of agriculture.** Encouraging and enabling successive generations of Maine citizens to enter the field of agriculture.

**Sec. 2. Commission; duties.** The commission shall also prepare any other recommendations it deems necessary to maintain an agricultural economy in the State. Toward these ends, the commission shall:

1. **Compile information.** Compile existing information on prime and unique agricultural land, including that which is currently in use or which has the potential to be used, with particular emphasis on lands subject to urban pressures of development;

2. **Review.** Review efforts made in other states and the Province of Canada to protect agricultural land and develop recommendations as necessary to protect Maine's agricultural land;

3. **Develop recommendations.** Develop specific recommendations toward greater state self-sufficiency in the production of food, indiginous fertilizers and soil-improving materials;

4. **Examine federal and state policies.** Examine existing federal and state policies and programs which may be contributing to the conversion of prime agricultural land or which may be unnecessarily restricting Maine agricultural enterprise and make recommendations for change;

5. **Make determinations.** Determine the feasibility of diversifying agricultural production for the benefit of both producers and consumers;

6. **Make recommendations.** Recommend ways by which statewide agricultural resource planning may be coordinated in the State; and

7. **Study and recommend methods.** Study present successes in direct marketing of food in Maine and recommend methods for increasing the scope and effectiveness of direct marketing.

**Sec. 3. Membership.** The Maine Food and Farmland Study Commission shall be composed of 21 members. After consultation with farming interests in the State, the Governor shall appoint 11 public members who shall be broadly representative of Maine's agricultural interest including, but not limited to, the dairy, the poultry and the potato industries and commercial, small-scale and organic farming interests, as well as those of food consumers. The 11 public members shall be appointed from a list of 22 names, 11 submitted by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and 11 submitted by the President of the Senate. The remaining 10 members shall include the Commissioner of Agriculture, the Commissioner of Conservation, the State Tax Assessor, the Commissioner of Environmental Protection, the Vice-president for Research and Public Services at the Universiy of Maine, the Dean of the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture at the University of Maine, the Director of the Cooperative Extension Service, the President of the Maine Association of Conservation Districts, or their respective designees, one member of the House of Representatives and one member of the Senate.

**Sec. 4. Termination; officers; expenses.** The commission shall terminate on June 30, 1979, and all appointed members shall serve terms to expire on that date. The commission shall elect from its own membership a chairman and such other officers as it deems necessary. Meetings shall be held at the call of the chairman or at the call of more than half of the membership. All public members shall receive $25 per day for their services at meetings or hearings and all members shall receive necessary traveling expenses for attending any meeting of the commission or for any travel in connection with

the official business of the commission and under specific authority of the commission.

**Sec. 5. Assistance.** The commission shall have the authority to request assistance of state agencies, departments, legislative committees or other instrumentalities of the State and to hire necessary staff to carry out the purposes of this Act.

**Sec. 6. Appropriation.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the Maine Food and Farmland Study Commission for fiscal year 1977-78, the sum of $30,000 to carry out the purposes of this Act. The breakdown shall be as follows:

| | 1977-78 |
|---|---|
| AGRICULTURE, DEPARTMENT OF | |
| Maine Food and Farmland Study Commission | |
| All Other | $30,000 |

## STATEMENT OF FACT

The purpose of this bill is to establish the Maine Food and Farmland Study Commission.