

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FIRST REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND NINTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 1235

H. P. 1000

House of Representatives, March 15, 1979

Referred to the Committee on State Government. Sent up for concurrence and ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Mr. Hughes of Auburn.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-NINE

AN ACT Authorizing a Study to Determine the Feasibility of Establishing a System of Youth Hostels.

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

Sec. 1. Commissioner to study. The Commissioner of Conservation shall study the feasibility of establishing a system of youth hostels in the State. A written report detailing the study shall be submitted to the Legislature not later than February 1, 1980.

Sec. 2. Procedure. The commissioner shall consult with representatives of the public and private sectors likely to have an interest, including representatives of the tourism industry and of national and international hostel organizations. State agencies, including the University of Maine, shall provide assistance to the commissioner if requested. The commissioner shall hold at least one public hearing, after notice, to receive the views of the public.

Sec. 3. Content of study. At a minimum, the report shall include:

1. **Suitable locations.** Identification of the most suitable locations for hostels, both public and private;

2. **Review of state property.** A review of property and facilities owned by the State as potential sites for hostels, including state parks and university facilities;

- 3. Description of proposed network.** A description of a proposed network of hostels conducive to touring by bicycle, foot and water;
- 4. Model for management.** A model for managing the hostels, which may include public or private management, or both;
- 5. Cost model.** A cost model for developing and maintaining the system, taking account of public sources, including federal sources, and private sources, including user fees and grants from private organizations;
- 6. Evaluation of demand.** An evaluation of the likely demand for the facilities, costs of operation and financing opportunities and problems;
- 7. Recommendations on youth hostel system.** Recommendations of the commissioner on whether and how to establish a youth hostel system; and
- 8. Appendix.** An appendix containing comments and recommendations on the report, as submitted by representatives of the tourism industry, national and international hosteling organization, the university and others.

STATEMENT OF FACT

The purpose of this bill is to require the Commissioner of Conservation to conduct a study of the feasibility of establishing a system of youth hostels. Representatives of the public and private sector are to be consulted and their views to be made a part of the study. This representation would include, for example, the tourism industry, national and international hosteling organization and the state university. The commissioner is required to submit the report to the Legislature by February 1, 1980.

Very generally, hostels are low cost, often nonprofit, supervised accommodations which facilitate inexpensive and energy efficient travel and enjoyment of parks and other public and private facilities, normally by youth. These facilities typically contain sheltered overnight sleeping accommodations and sanitary facilities and often contain cooking, eating and recreation space.

Legislation encouraging and assisting hostels has been enacted in 3 states and is being proposed in several others and in Congress.

A hosteling program may have several benefits for Maine:

1. Inexpensive accommodations will be made available to youthful residents of the State who might not otherwise be able to travel;
2. Some additional business will be generated immediately, mainly for the tourism industry, by travelers from out-of-state who otherwise might not vacation in Maine; and
3. Potentially significant future tourist business is likely to be generated, as young hostellers later return with their families to vacation in Maine.