

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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SECOND REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND NINTH LEGISLATURE

**Legislative Document**

**No. 1929**

H. P. 1825

House of Representatives, February 12, 1980

Reported by Mr. Dow from the Joint Select Committee on Fisheries and Wildlife pursuant to Joint Order H. P. 1517 and printed under Joint Rules No. 17.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk of the House

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY

**AN ACT to Provide an Income Tax Checkoff for Voluntary Contributions to the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.**

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

36 MRSA § 5284 is enacted to read:

**§ 5284. Voluntary contributions to fish and wildlife program**

1. **Findings and purpose.** The Legislature finds that fish and wildlife resources are an important part of the heritage, economy and welfare of the State. The Legislature further finds that it is in the public interest to preserve and enhance the protected and other species of fish and wildlife through habitat acquisition, protection and wise management. This section is enacted to provide a means to finance this protection and management through a voluntary contribution on state income tax return forms.

2. **Procedure.** Every individual, who is entitled to a refund under this chapter, may designate that any portion of the refund be paid to the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Every individual who is not entitled to a refund under this chapter may add any amount to his tax liability to be paid to the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

3. **Contributions credited to Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.** The State Tax Assessor shall determine annually the total amount designated pursuant to this section and shall report this amount to the Treasurer of State who shall credit this amount to the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.

4. **Repealed.** This section is repealed on January 1, 1984.

#### STATEMENT OF FACT

This bill will enable individuals receiving state income tax refunds to donate a portion of the refund to finance fish and wildlife management in Maine.

Currently, sportsmen who purchase hunting and fishing licenses finance the majority of the activities of the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Many of the department's activities, however, are not directly related to hunting and fishing. These activities, benefiting the public at large, include enforcement of environmental laws, wildlife habitat acquisition and endangered species protection programs. The voluntary check-off contribution will give people who may not hunt or fish the opportunity to contribute towards these and other important programs. The provision will terminate after 3 years.

Several other states either have or are considering similar legislation. In Colorado about 10% of the individuals receiving refunds contribute an average of \$4.90. With similar participation in Maine, this bill could raise as much as \$100,000 each year for the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.