

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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FIRST REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND TENTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 1187

S. P. 394

In Senate, March 9, 1981

Submitted by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife pursuant to Joint Rule 24.

Referred to the Committee on Taxation. Sent down of concurrence and ordered printed.

MAY M. ROSS, Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator Clark of Cumberland.

Cosponsors: Representative Post of Owl's Head, Representative Gillis of Calais, Senator Redmond of Somerset.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-ONE

AN ACT to Provide an Income Tax Check-off 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 c. 841 is enacted to read:

CHAPTER 841

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

TO FISH AND WILDLIFE PROGRAM

§ 5351. 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, protect, perpetuate and enhance fish and wildlife resources through protection habitat acquisition and wise management. This chapter is enacted to provide a means by which this protection and management may be financed through a voluntary check-off designation on state income tax return forms.

§ 5352. Voluntary check-off designation

Each individual taxpayer required to file a return pursuant to section 5111 and desiring to contribute to the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife may make a contribution in addition to taxes owed in the amount of \$1, \$5, \$10 or a greater amount of his choice by placing an "X" in the appropriate box on the state income tax form.

§ 5353. Fish and Wildlife Fund

There is created the Maine Fish and Wildlife Fund to which shall be credited all contributions from this program. All funds and the interest accrued on these funds shall be used by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife for the purposes set forth in Title 12, section 7074.

§ 5354. Contributions credited to Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

The State Tax Assessor shall determine annually the total amount designated pursuant to section 5352 and shall report this amount to the Treasurer of State, who shall credit this amount to the Maine Fish and Wildlife Fund.

STATEMENT OF FACT

This bill enables individuals to donate a portion of their tax refund or pay additional tax in order 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 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 an opportunity to contribute toward these and other important programs.

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.