

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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1 FIRST REGULAR SESSION
2

3 ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH LEGISLATURE
4

5 Legislative Document

No. 969

6
7 S.P. 324

In Senate, March 3, 1983

8 On Motion of Senator Carpenter of Aroostook referred to the Committee
9 on Agriculture. Sent down for concurrence and ordered printed.

10 JOY J. O'BRIEN, Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator Wood of York.

Cosponsors: Representative Michael of Auburn, Representative Sherburne
11 of Dexter and Representative Lisnik of Presque Isle.

12 STATE OF MAINE
13

14 IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
15 NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-THREE
16

17 RESOLVE, Authorizing and Directing the
18 Commissioner of Agriculture, Food and
19 Rural Resources to Promote Regional
20 and International Cooperation in the
21 Development of Agricultural Programs De-
22 signed to Encourage Greater Food Production,
23 Marketing and Food Self-sufficiency Among
24 the States of Northern New England
25 and Quebec and the Maritimes.
26

27 Preamble. Whereas, the Legislature finds that
28 common problems in the effective utilization of our
29 agricultural resource base, natural and human, com-
30 pels a closer working relationship on projects which
31 offer potential for more food production of a
32 diversified nature, not only to strengthen the eco-
33 nomic position of our rural areas, but also to ensure
34 greater food self-sufficiency for the region; and

1 Whereas, the Legislature declares that it
2 attaches importance to the pursuit of common goals in
3 the field of agriculture. It is prepared to offer
4 financial and other forms of support on a matching
5 basis with neighboring states and provinces and with
6 private foundations, to foster research, planning,
7 development and communications projects which aim to
8 strengthen the region's capacity to develop sustain-
9 able agricultural practices and activities; and

10 Whereas, through cooperation and the sharing of
11 resources, development work can begin and continue to
12 build a more productive and diversified agricultural
13 community on a regional basis, comprised of small to
14 mid-sized family farms. Pooling scarce resources can
15 insure that states and provinces which have contem-
16 plated developmental projects beyond affordability by
17 individual states and provinces alone, can secure ad-
18 equate financial and auxiliary support to pursue ac-
19 tivities producing regional dividends; and

20 Whereas, initially, the Legislature suggests that
21 regional cooperation can be best encouraged through
22 the support of information exchange projects which
23 concentrate on the transfer of vital information
24 already assembled to promote diversified and inten-
25 sive production of farm and forest products. For
26 example, the Maine Public Broadcasting Service has
27 already developed a pilot television program, called
28 the Small Farm Journal, which effectively relays
29 information to farmers about various production tech-
30 niques and equipment options. The station in Maine
31 has been seeking financial backing for several years
32 to develop a comprehensive series of media programs
33 related to farm production alternatives, but as yet
34 fund-raising attempts have not produced the necessary
35 amount of financial support. Another example of the
36 use of communications technology is providing the
37 opportunity for farmers, farm groups, university and
38 extension officials, and Department of Agriculture,
39 Food and Rural Resources' personnel to exchange prac-
40 tical information in a timely fashion without having
41 to travel great distances from farm or place of work.
42 The use of computers in a teleconferencing system
43 used in the human services field in northern New
44 England states could have appropriate applications to
45 rural development efforts in the region; and

1 Whereas, later on, common goals in the marketing
2 areas can be pursued, such as emphasizing regional
3 pooling of supplies of products to penetrate larger
4 wholesale markets beyond the reach of small growers
5 and to review existing marketing structures with an
6 aim to increasing efficiency and avoiding unproduc-
7 tive duplication of efforts; now, therefore, be it

8 **Regional Agriculture Committee; established.**
9 **Resolved:** That there is established in Maine a
10 Regional Agriculture Committee to insure that this
11 policy is faithfully pursued and to which matching
12 funds will be entrusted to stimulate and support ben-
13 efitial projects. The committee shall consist of 9
14 members: The Commissioner of Agriculture, Food and
15 Rural Resources, who will be the chairman; Director
16 of the Maine Canadian Legislative Advisory Commis-
17 sion; Director of the Cooperative Extension Service;
18 2 members of the Legislature, one appointed by the
19 President of the Senate and one appointed by the
20 Speaker of the House; representation from 2 different
21 farm organizations, one associated with an estab-
22 lished major commodity crop, such as apples, pota-
23 toes, milk, etc., and the other associated with a
24 more diversified farm production unit chosen by the
25 Commissioner of Agriculture, Food and Rural
26 Resources; and a consumer, nonfarmer, representative
27 and a representative of the communications-media
28 field, appointed by the Governor; and be it further

29 **Duties of committee. Resolved:** That the Region-
30 al Agriculture Committee shall meet at least once a
31 year, but not more than 4 times in a calendar year
32 to:

33 1. Review proposals from public and private non-
34 profit institutions in Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont,
35 Quebec and the Maritimes which aim to strengthen the
36 agricultural capacity of the region;

37 2. Establish conditions for the application of
38 matching funds to support projects, insuring that
39 results will be adequately disseminated in a timely
40 fashion;

41 3. Administer matching funds made available to
42 it by the Legislature and other sources for the pur-

1 poses stated and to prepare an annual financial
2 report, along with a written account of investment
3 practices and matching donors;

4 4. Report annually to the Legislature to share
5 information about the activities of the committee and
6 the benefits achieved as a result of matching grants
7 extended; and

8 5. Recommend to the Legislature continued levels
9 of financial support, if necessary and advisable; and
10 be it further

11 **Appropriation. Resolved:** That the Legislature
12 appropriate \$25,000 to be made available to the
13 Regional Agriculture Committee for fiscal year
14 1983-84, and \$25,000 to be made available in fiscal
15 year 1984-85.

16 STATEMENT OF FACT

17 This resolve instructs the Commissioner of Agri-
18 culture, Food and Rural Resources to form the Region-
19 al Agriculture Committee for the purpose of matching
20 funds from neighboring states in New England and
21 provinces in Canada to support projects designed to
22 strengthen the agricultural sector of the region.

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