

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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1 FIRST REGULAR SESSION
2

3 ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH LEGISLATURE
4

5 Legislative Document

No. 1348

6
7 S.P. 441

In Senate, March 28, 1983

8 Submitted by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources
9 pursuant to Joint Rule 24.

10 Referred to the Committee on Agriculture, sent down for concurrence and
ordered printed.

JOY J. O'BRIEN, Secretary of the Senate
Presented by Senator Wood of York.

11 Cosponsors: Representative Crouse of Washburn and Representative Hall
of Sangerville.

12 STATE OF MAINE
13

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

17 AN ACT to Promote the Development of
18 Human Resources in Rural Areas of Maine.
19

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

22 Sec. 1. 7 MRSA §1-B is enacted to read:

23 §1-B. Preservation of rural life and values; joint
24 responsibility

25 The Legislature finds there has been a dramatic
26 increase of interest in rural living and small and
27 part-time farming; that a high proportion of the
28 population in rural areas are poor, elderly and
29 underemployed; agriculture is significant to the
30 state's economy and that a prospering, stable rural
31 community contributes to the rural quality of life,
32 the preservation of productive farm, farmlands and
33 open space.

1 The Legislature finds that programs which improve
2 the employment opportunity, rural skills, food
3 supply, health and nutrition of the rural people of
4 Maine will improve the economy of Maine, improve the
5 rural quality of life and the health of people and is
6 therefore in the public interest.

7 The Legislature further finds the preservation of
8 rural life and values in the State to be the joint
9 responsibility of all public agencies, local, state
10 and federal, whose policies and programs substan-
11 tially impact the economy and general welfare of
12 people who reside in rural Maine, such as the devel-
13 opment and implementation of programs which assist in
14 the maintenance of family farms, provide specialized
15 opportunities for education and technical training
16 and improve health and nutrition. The state agencies
17 in addition to the department include, but are not
18 limited to, the Department of Educational and Cul-
19 tural Services, Department of Human Services, Depart-
20 ment of Labor and the Division of Community Services
21 of the Executive Department.

22 Sec. 2. 7 MRSA c. 9 is enacted to read:

23 CHAPTER 9

24 LOCAL FOOD CENTERS

25 §301. Legislative intent

26 The Legislature finds that malnutrition, obesity
27 and other dietary deficiencies pose serious threats
28 to the health of Maine people, particularly for low-
29 income and elderly residents. It further finds that
30 local production and home processing of food is
31 increasing in Maine and provides families greater ac-
32 cess to nutritionally well-balanced products for con-
33 sumption.

34 §302. Community cooperative food centers

35 There shall be established within the State com-
36 munity cooperative food centers to provide rural con-
37 sumers with low-cost nutritious local food, facili-
38 tate production and marketing of local food, provide
39 opportunities for cost-effective local food process-

1 ing facilities and to deliver nutritional education
2 leading to improved health of rural citizens.

3 This chapter shall be administered by the Divi-
4 sion of Community Services in cooperation with appro-
5 priate local, state and federal agencies. The divi-
6 sion shall make challenge grants available for pilot
7 community food center projects.

8 Sec. 3. 20-A MRS §4605 is enacted to read:

9 §4605. Agricultural and natural resource education;
10 curricula and resource materials

11 Curricula and resource materials in agricultural
12 and natural resource education shall be developed by
13 the department and made available to students in
14 public elementary and secondary schools.

15 In kindergarten and grades 1 to 6, educational
16 curriculum elements may be included for the purpose
17 of career orientation, consumer knowledge and envi-
18 ronmental awareness. In grades 7 and 8, educational
19 elements may include exploratory programs in agricul-
20 tural arts and agencies. In grades 9 to 12, basic
21 courses may be offered to provide consumer awareness
22 and skills, a vocational exploration and skills and
23 general agricultural education. Programs may include
24 animal sciences, plant sciences, agricultural mechan-
25 ics, energy utilization and conservation and commu-
26 nity development.

27 Sec. 4. 20-A MRS §10101, sub-§2, ¶A, as enacted
28 by PL 1981, c. 693, §§5 and 8, is amended to read:

29 A. Provide vocational, technical and occupa-
30 tional education for those who demonstrate apti-
31 tude and need and who require training designed
32 for service in a agriculture, trade, industry or
33 commerce;

34 STATEMENT OF FACT

35 Rural poverty, malnutrition and lack of necessary
36 training for rural living threaten the social and
37 economic stability of rural communities. In 1977,

1 the United States Bureau of Census estimated the per
2 capita income of Maine people living in rural commu-
3 nities averaged \$3,844, compared to \$5,006 in urban
4 areas.

5 An overwhelming majority of the population,
6 including those who live in rural communities, are of
7 nonfarm background. Many lack basic knowledge and
8 appreciation for how agriculture is carried out and
9 of how food arrives at their tables. There is also a
10 documented lack of knowledge of adequate nutrition
11 and the value of locally-grown fresh produce.
12 Finally, the future of farming is threatened because
13 of an aging farm population without adequately
14 trained and knowledgeable entrants ready to take over
15 the farm.

16 The availability of appropriate vocational and
17 occupational training for the new rural population is
18 limited. One possible reason for this is that the
19 common data base and collection process is not
20 refined enough to reflect the unique, changing agri-
21 cultural and rural trends in Maine.

22 This bill responds to the variety of problems in
23 rural areas by coordinating and targeting the exist-
24 ing resources of the Department of Agriculture, Food
25 and Rural Resources; Department of Educational and
26 Cultural Services; the Division of Community Ser-
27 vices; Department of Labor; federal agencies in Maine
28 and other regional and local private and public orga-
29 nizations.

30 Section 1 is a legislative expression of policy
31 regarding the special human resource needs in rural
32 areas.

33 Section 2 directs the Division of Community Ser-
34 vices, in cooperation with the Department of Agricul-
35 ture, Food and Rural Resources, and other appropriate
36 state and federal agencies, to establish pilot
37 projects and assist local organizations in developing
38 local community food centers, which will provide a
39 central easily identified place to operate such
40 projects as small scale food processing and nutrition
41 education.

1 Section 3 directs the Department of Educational
2 and Cultural Services to develop curriculum materials
3 for kindergarten and grades 1 to 12 in order to pro-
4 mote a functional understanding of the food and fiber
5 system, and develop an awareness and appreciation of
6 the citizens' role as stewards of our natural
7 resources.

8 Section 4 amends the statute dealing with voca-
9 tional technical institutes to include courses in
10 agriculture.

11 Funding for this bill is provided for in the Part
12 II budget, with \$10,000 for both fiscal year 1984 and
13 fiscal year 1985 to be used by the Division of Commu-
14 nity Services for challenge grants on a matching,
15 competitive basis to private or public organizations
16 to establish pilot community cooperative food centers
17 authorized in section 2, and \$15,000 for both fiscal
18 year 1984 and fiscal year 1985 to be used by the
19 Department of Educational and Cultural Services to
20 implement the curriculum development program author-
21 ized in section 3.

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