

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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1 (New Draft of H.P. 1789, L.D. 2364)
2 (New Title)

3 SECOND REGULAR SESSION
4

5 ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH LEGISLATURE
6

7 Legislative Document

No. 2438

9 H.P. 1842

House of Representatives, April 6, 1984

10 Reported by Representative Locke from the Committee on Agriculture
11 and printed under Joint Rule 2.

12 Original bill presented by Representative Michael of Auburn.

Cosponsored by Senator Wood of York and Representative Hall of
Sangerville.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

13
14 STATE OF MAINE
15

16 IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
17 NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-FOUR
18

19 AN ACT to Establish a Commission to
20 Assess the Loss of Farmland in Maine.
21

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

24 Sec. 1. Commission on farmland loss. It is the
25 policy of the State to ensure an adequate and
26 affordable supply of productive agricultural land to
27 meet the needs of existing and future agricultural
28 operations, to protect viable agricultural lands from
29 conversion to development, to protect agricultural
30 operations from constraints on necessary agricultural
31 practices due to encroachment of incompatible land
32 uses into farming areas, to enhance the economic
33 viability of agricultural operations and to support
34 the supply and market structures needed for a viable
35 agricultural economy in order to arrest the abandon-

1 ment of productive agricultural land and its subse-
2 quent reversion to forested land and conversion to
3 development.

4 1. Commission established. A Commission on
5 Farmland Loss is established to assess the problem of
6 farmland loss in Maine and to report its findings and
7 recommendations for legislative action to the Joint
8 Standing Committee on Agriculture during the 112th
9 Legislature. This report shall be made no later than
10 January 15, 1985.

11 A. The Commission on Farmland Loss shall have 15
12 members, including 2 members of the House of Rep-
13 resentatives, appointed by the Speaker of the
14 House of Representatives, both of whom shall be
15 chosen from the membership of the Joint Standing
16 Committee on Agriculture and one of whom shall
17 represent each political party; 2 members of the
18 Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate,
19 both of whom shall be chosen from the membership
20 of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture
21 and one of whom shall be chosen to represent each
22 political party; one representative each selected
23 by the Maine Farm Bureau, the Maine Association
24 of Conservation Districts, the Maine State
25 Grange, the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners
26 Association, the Maine Municipal Association and
27 the Maine Homebuilders Association; the chairman
28 of the State Soil and Water Conservation Commis-
29 sion; 3 members representing the public at large,
30 who shall not be elected officials currently
31 holding office and who shall not be directly as-
32 sociated with either agricultural enterprises or
33 organizations. The public members shall be ap-
34 pointed by the Governor, and the Commissioner of
35 Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources, who shall
36 serve as a nonvoting chairman of the commission.

37 B. The commission shall:

38 (1) Further define the nature of the prob-
39 lem. The commission shall examine current
40 information about the nature of farmland
41 loss in Maine, shall support additional
42 studies as necessary to develop a common un-
43 derstanding of the causes and extent of

1 farmland loss throughout Maine, and shall,
2 in its final report, describe the nature of
3 farmland loss in Maine;

4 (2) Describe Maine's important agricultural
5 land. The commission shall consider the
6 characteristics of agricultural land which
7 the State in its policy and programs is
8 seeking to protect. The commission shall
9 make recommendations as to how the land
10 should be identified;

11 (3) Review programs in other states for the
12 protection of agricultural land. The com-
13 mission shall review agricultural land pro-
14 tection programs in other states and shall
15 consider which of those programs are most
16 appropriate to Maine in light of the nature
17 of Maine's farmland loss in various parts of
18 the State, their effectiveness in preventing
19 future farmland loss, their impact on far-
20 mers, other landowners and taxpayers and the
21 financial resources available to deal with
22 the problem of farmland loss;

23 (4) Hold public hearings. The commission
24 shall hold at least 5 public hearings
25 throughout the State to report on its as-
26 sessment of the nature of farmland loss in
27 Maine, the characteristics of land to be
28 protected and farmland protection programs
29 in other states. At these hearings, the
30 commission shall solicit public input on the
31 kind of programs which would be most appro-
32 priate for Maine; and

33 (5) Recommend a farmland protection pro-
34 gram. The commission shall, in its final
35 report, make recommendations to the 112th
36 Legislature for legislation to reduce
37 farmland loss. These recommendations shall
38 reflect the findings of the commission with
39 respect to commission activities under para-
40 graphs A to C.

41 C. The commission shall be provided staff sup-
42 port by the Department of Agriculture, Food and

1 Rural Resources. Commission members shall not
2 receive a per diem but shall be reimbursed for
3 expenses incurred in the course of the commis-
4 sion's work.

5 Sec. 2. Appropriation. The following funds are
6 appropriated from the General Fund to carry out the
7 purposes of this Act.

8 1984-85

9 AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL RESOURCES,
10 DEPARTMENT OF

11	Personal Services	\$18,000
12	All Other	<u>25,000</u>
13	Total	\$43,000

14 Provides funding for a
15 9-month project position,
16 commission expenses and
17 necessary data collection
18 activities and printing
19 to facilitate the work of
20 the commission.

21 STATEMENT OF FACT

22 This new draft establishes a state policy which
23 recognizes the importance of agriculture to the
24 state's economy and the need to ensure an adequate
25 and affordable supply of productive agricultural land
26 as the basis for that activity.

1 The new draft also creates a 15-member Commission
2 on Farmland Loss to further define the nature of
3 farmland loss in Maine; to define those agricultural
4 lands which are important to protect; to review pro-
5 grams in other states to protect agricultural land
6 and to identify those applicable to Maine; to hold
7 public hearings throughout the State to report its
8 findings and solicit public input on appropriate ac-
9 tions to protect Maine's important agricultural
10 lands; and to recommend a farmland protection program
11 to the 112th Legislature.

12

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