## MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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| (EMERGENCY)<br>(New Draft of H.P. 229, L.D. 263)<br>SECOND REGULAR SESSION   |
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| ONE HUNDRED AND TWELFTH LEGISLATURE  |
| Legislative Document No. 2171  |
| H.P. 1540  Reported by the Majority from the Committee on Transportation and printed under Joint Rule 2. Original bill submitted by the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation as approved by the Legislative Council on April 25, 1984. |
| EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk   |
|  |
| STATE OF MAINE   |
| IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-SIX  |
| AN ACT Relating to a New Registration Plate<br>Issue.  |
| Emergency preamble. Whereas, Acts of the Legis-<br>lature do not become effective until 90 days after<br>adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and  |
| Whereas, the last general reissue of new license plates in Maine occurred in 1974; and   |
| Whereas, current license plates when issued more than a decade ago had a useful life expectancy of 6 years; and  |
| Whereas, there is considerable evidence to show that the battered and faded condition of the plates hamper law enforcement efforts; and  |
| Whereas, the Division of Motor Vehicles needs to purge its files of inactive or invalid registrations as soon as possible; and   |

1 Whereas, Maine needs to establish a general reis-2 sue schedule at 6-year intervals to prevent future 3 delays in distributing new plates; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore.

- Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:
- 12 Sec. 1. 29 MRSA c. 5, Art. I-A is enacted to 13 read:
- 14 ARTICLE I-A

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- 15 ISSUE OF REGISTRATION PLATES
- 16 §131. Registration plate issues

The Secretary of State shall provide a new general issue of registration plates every 6 years for all vehicles required to be registered in this State for operation on Maine highways. The first new general issue of registration plates shall commence on April 1, 1987, and successive new general issues of registration plates shall be issued every 6 years thereafter.

Each new general issue of registration plates as required by this section shall be easily distinguishable from the preceding general issue.

The following design elements are guidelines to be followed by the Secretary of State in the production of new plates to be issued from April 1987 to December 1992. A new plate shall have a white background; identification numbers and letters and the border shall be distinctly navy blue in color with any graphic material appearing in the color red. The name of the State "Maine" shall appear centered of the plate and top the designation the "Vactionland" shall appear centered at the bottom.

- This guidance is meant to be applied in accordance with the authority held by the Secretary of State in section 110.
- The Secretary of State shall adopt rules in accordance with Title 5, chapter 375, to implement this article. In these rules, the Secretary of State may include provisions to protect the integrity of the Maine motor vehicle registration plate, to provide for the issue of replacement plates and any other provisions to facilitate the implementation of this article.
- 12 §132. Fees for new issues of registration plates
- A fee of \$1 for each registration plate shall be collected by the Secretary of State from the vehicle registrant for new registration plate issues as referred to in section 131. This fee shall be in addition to any other registration fees required by this Title.
- 19 Sec. 2. 29 MRSA §191, as amended by PL 1983, c. 20 455, §10, is repealed and the following enacted in 21 its place:
  - §191. Reservation of same number

- 23 1. Plate issue year. The Secretary of State
  24 shall reserve until April 1st the same registration
  25 number for the succeeding registration year for per26 sons who notify the Secretary of State prior to Jan27 uary 1st in writing of their desire to retain their
  28 registration number. The fee for retention of the
  29 same registration number is \$5.
- If a person wishes to retain his registration number and does not have a vehicle to register on April 1st, he may hold his registration number for a maximum of 2 registration years by depositing with the Secretary of State the sum of \$10 for each year. These fees are not refundable and shall not be applied as part payment of the registration fee.
- All numbers other than those reserved shall be released and issued in rotation after April 1st, except that a person wishing to select a number out of rota-

1 tion may do so by paying his registration fee and a 2 reserved number fee of \$5. 3 Holders of initial plates shall pay the sum of 4 which shall be credited toward renewal of the initial 5 plates reserved. 6 2. Nonplate issue year. When a person fails to 7 reregister during a nonplate issue year and the reg-8 istration remains expired for 6 consecutive months, 9 his reservation of the same number may cease and 10 number becomes available for reissuance or reassign-11 ment, or both. 12 Sec. 3. Allocation. The following funds are al-13 located from the Highway Fund to carry out the 14 poses of this Act. 15 1985-86 1986-87 16 SECRETARY OF STATE, 17 DEPARTMENT OF Division of Motor Vehicles 18 19 Personal Services \$156,146 20 All Other \$1,324,732 258,339 9,900 21 Capital Expenditures \$1,324,732 22 Total \$424,385 23 Provides funds in fisyear 1985-86 to 24 25 purchase license plate 26 materials. Provides 27 fiscal year funds in 28 1986-87 to purchase additional 29 materials 30 needed as well as to 31 hire 11 project em-32 ployees as follows: 33 manufacturing project employees; 2 laborer 34 35 project employees; and 36 2 clerical project em-37 ployees. These 11 38 project employees

shall be employed for

of

maximum

months.

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1 Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this Act shall take effect when ap-2 3 proved. 4 FISCAL NOTE 5 This new draft requires Highway Fund allocations in the following fiscal years: 7 Fiscal Year 1986 \$1,324,732 Fiscal Year 1987 \$ 424,385 8 Fiscal Year 1988 \$ 291,776 9 The total Highway Fund allocations over the 3 10 11 fiscal years will be \$2,040,893. Highway Fund revenues will increase, due to the 12 \$1 per plate fee and the \$5 fee for "reserved" or 13 14 "out-of-sequence" plates, as follows: Fiscal Year 1986 15 Fiscal Year 1987 16 \$ 440,000 17 Fiscal Year 1988 \$1,425,000 18 The total increased revenues to the Highway Fund over the 2 fiscal years will be \$1,865,000. 19 20 STATEMENT OF FACT 21 During the First Regular Session of the 112th 22 Legislature, the Division of Motor Vehicles requested the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation to al-23 locate highway funds for a new general issue of 24 25 istration plates in 1986. The Division of Motor Vehicles justified its request by explaining that registration plates were meant to have a useful life of 26 27 28 6 years, but current plates are more than 10 As a result of extended exposure to the ele-29 ments, many plates have deteriorated seriously 30 31 there is evidence to show that the battered and faded condition of the plates hampers law enforcement ef-32 33 forts.

requested authorization to study this problem and to

come up with a solution. In the study process, the

The Joint Standing Committee on Transportation

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committee learned 2 important pieces of information which point to necessary action.

- 1. A survey of evasion of motor vehicle registration in Maine undertaken by the Department of Transportation shows an evasion rate of 4.7% which translates into an annual loss of \$500,000 in registration fees to the Highway Fund and an annual loss of \$1,100,000 in excise tax revenues to municipalities.
- 2. Registration files at the Division of Motor Vehicles must be purged. Current Division of Motor Vehicles files do not indicate active, valid registrations; inactive registrations; or invalid registrations. Presently, the Division of Motor Vehicles estimates that over 500,000 invalid registrations appear in their records, but they cannot be readily distinguished.

The committee reviewed several proposals and finally directed the Division of Motor Vehicles to prepare L.D. 263 which was discussed at length along with counter proposals from various sources, including proposals from the Secretary of State. Uncertainty about the best way to finance the reissue prompted the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation to hold the bill over to this Second Regular Session of the 112th Legislature for further consideration.

This new draft calls for a general issue registration plate every 6 years and the first new general issue will begin on April 1, 1987.

30 Section 1 establishes the date for a new plate 31 issue and a fee for the new plate, which should gen-32 erate revenue of approximately \$1,865,000.

33 Section 2 provides for the reservation of plate 34 numbers.

Section 3 provides funds to carry out the purpose of this new draft.