

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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SECOND REGULAR SESSION

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ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH LEGISLATURE

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Legislative Document

NO. 2181

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H.P. 1595                      House of Representatives, February 2, 1988  
Approved for introduction by a majority of the  
Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 26.

Reference to the Committee on Agriculture suggested and  
ordered printed.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

Presented by Representative MAHANY of Easton.

Cosponsored by Representatives TARDY of Palmyra, PARADIS  
of Frenchville and PINES of Limestone.

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STATE OF MAINE

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

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1                      **AN ACT to Encourage and Monitor the Use of New**  
2    **Potato Varieties.**  
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4                      Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as  
5 follows:

6                      Sec. 1. 7 MRSA §2157 is enacted to read:

7                      §2157. Promotion and variety monitoring

1           1.   Promotion.       The Seed Potato Board shall  
2 develop and promote new potato varieties.

3           A.   The board shall provide funding necessary to  
4 hire an agronomist who will work with the Maine  
5 Agricultural Experiment Station in Presque Isle  
6 for the purpose of:

7                   (1) Developing the best cultural practices  
8 for new varieties;

9                   (2) Promoting new varieties of Maine seed  
10 potatoes to farmers in Maine and other areas;

11                   (3) Establishing field trials of new  
12 varieties; and

13                   (4) Monitoring the sales and performance of  
14 the new varieties.

15           B.   The board shall establish a facility at the  
16 Porter Farm to produce, in isolation,  
17 pathogen-free seedstocks of advanced selections of  
18 breeding programs, in order to:

19                   (1) Provide extensive and rigorous pathogen  
20 testing on the seedstocks introduced,  
21 cultured and multiplied in the facility;

22                   (2) Establish systematic production of  
23 pathogen-free seedstocks by meristem culture  
24 after heat therapy to free the stocks of any  
25 infection viruses; and

26                   (3) Provide limited increase of the  
27 pathogen-free seedstocks in the field to  
28 produce quality seed potatoes for further  
29 evaluation by breeders and growers.

30           2.   Challenge grants.       The commissioner shall  
31 establish a challenge grant program to help in  
32 establishing field trials for new potato varieties.  
33 Grant proposals shall be approved by the commissioner  
34 after review and recommendation by the Potato Plant  
35 Breeder at the Maine Agricultural Experiment

1 Station in Presque Isle, the chairman of the seed  
2 grower's executive council of the Maine Potato Board  
3 and the director of the Seed Potato Board. Grants may  
4 be given to farmers outside of this State. Grants may  
5 consist of seed, assistance in determining cultural  
6 practices and a percentage of the farmer's production  
7 costs to be determined by the commissioner. Those  
8 receiving grants shall cooperate with the Maine  
9 Agricultural Experiment Station and the Seed Potato  
10 Board in developing the best cultural practices and  
11 sharing production and marketing information.

12 3. Monitoring and report. The Seed Potato Board  
13 shall monitor the sales and performance of new potato  
14 varieties and shall report annually to the  
15 commissioner and the joint standing committee of the  
16 Legislature having jurisdiction over agriculture. The  
17 report shall summarize the field trial program and  
18 address total sales of new seed stock, adoption by the  
19 State's farmers, yields, quality and other indicators  
20 of performance. The Maine Agricultural Experiment  
21 Station shall assist the board in the monitoring and  
22 the preparation of the report.

23 **Sec. 2. Appropriation.** The following funds  
24 are appropriated from the General Fund to carry out  
25 the purposes of this Act.

26 1988-89

27 AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND RURAL  
28 RESOURCES, DEPARTMENT OF

29 All Other \$63,000

30 This funding  
31 represents the first  
32 installment of a  
33 proposed 5-year plan.  
34 The federal  
35 government, through  
36 the United States  
37 Department of  
38 Agriculture-Agriculture  
39 Research Service, will  
40 provide companion  
41 funding. This bill  
42 provides \$35,000 to  
43 fund an agronomist at

1 the Maine Agricultural  
2 Experiment Station in  
3 Presque Isle to  
4 encourage and monitor  
5 the use of new potato  
6 varieties in  
7 cooperation with the  
8 Seed Potato Board;  
9 \$18,000 to the Porter  
10 Farm to defray startup  
11 and operating costs;  
12 \$10,000 to fund the  
13 challenge grant  
14 program which is  
15 created in this bill.

16 STATEMENT OF FACT

17 This bill directs the Seed Potato Board, located  
18 in the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural  
19 Resources, to promote new potato varieties by funding  
20 an agronomist's position at the Maine Agricultural  
21 Experiment Station. The agronomist will develop  
22 recommendations for the best cultural practices,  
23 organize field trials in Maine and in other market  
24 areas for Maine seed potatoes, assist in a challenge  
25 grant program and monitor the sales and performance of  
26 new varieties. To encourage growers to participate in  
27 field trials, the commissioner shall develop a  
28 challenge grant program, under which seed, information  
29 on cultural practices and a percentage of production  
30 costs may be provided to farmers. Funding for the  
31 challenge grant program as well as partial funding for  
32 the Porter Farm is provided. The federal government  
33 is very supportive of these efforts and has provided  
34 companion funds.

35 4279012888