

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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119th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-1999

Legislative Document

No. 178

S.P. 75

In Senate, January 11, 1999

An Act to Appropriate Block Grants for Regional Tourism Promotion.

Reference to the Committee on Business and Economic Development suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joy J. O'Brien".

JOY J. O'BRIEN
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator MILLS of Somerset.
Cosponsored by Senator FERGUSON of Oxford.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

4 **Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §13073-A is enacted to read:**

6 **§13073-A. Regional Tourism Promotion Grant Program**

8 1. Definitions. As used in this section, unless the
10 context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the
12 following meanings.

14 A. "Office" means the Office of Tourism and Community
16 Development within the Department of Economic and Community
18 Development.

20 B. "Region" means any of the following 8 regions of the
22 State as designated by the office:

24 (1) Southern Maine coast;

26 (2) Greater Portland and Casco Bay area;

28 (3) Mid-coast;

30 (4) Maine lakes and mountains;

32 (5) Katahdin, Moosehead and Penquis;

34 (6) Kennebec and Moose River valleys;

36 (7) Downeast Acadia; or

38 (8) Aroostook.

40 2. Program established. The Regional Tourism Promotion
42 Grant Program, referred to in this section as the "program," is
44 established within the office to provide grants for the promotion
46 of regional tourism in the State.

48 3. Grant criteria. The office shall use the following
criteria in determining an organization's eligibility for grants
under the program:

A. The organization applying for the grant represents the
broad interests of the region;

B. There is regular, dues-paying support for the
organization from businesses and municipal governments
within the region;

2 C. Money given the organization will be matched by
3 businesses benefiting from the proposed promotional programs;

4 D. The proposal contains methods to account for a return on
5 the State's investment;

6 E. There is evidence that the effort will generate
7 increased sales and taxes at least equal to the State's
8 contribution;

10 F. Alternative subsidies for tourism within the region are
11 limited; and

14 G. If the region served by the organization has an
15 unemployment level higher than the state average or has more
16 than half of its population living below the federal poverty
17 level, then this factor must be given special emphasis in
18 determining eligibility for the grant.

20 4. Amount of grants. The total of grants to any one region
21 may not exceed \$100,000 annually.

22 5. Funding. The Regional Tourism Promotion Grant Fund is
23 created as a nonlapsing fund administered by the Commissioner of
24 Economic and Community Development. All grants made pursuant to
25 this section must be made from that fund. The fund may receive
26 money from appropriations or allocations made by the Legislature
27 or by gift or grant from other sources. Annually, the
28 commissioner shall allocate a total of \$400,000 from the budget
29 of the office to the fund.

32 6. Adoption of rules. In addition to the criteria in
33 subsection 3, the office may adopt rules to develop additional
34 criteria for the selection of grant recipients and to designate
35 the towns to be included in the 8 regions. Rules adopted
36 pursuant to this section are routine technical rules as defined
37 by chapter 375, subchapter II-A.

38 7. Report to Legislature. The office shall submit an
39 annual report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature
40 having jurisdiction over business and economic development
41 matters no later than February 15th with respect to
42 implementation of the program. This report, at a minimum, must
43 include the number of grants awarded, the estimated impact of the
44 grant on the region and the estimated tourism dollars generated
45 as a result of the grant.

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SUMMARY

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4 This bill establishes the Regional Tourism Promotion Grant
6 Program to be administered by the Office of Tourism and Community
8 Development within the Department of Economic and Community
10 Development. Through the grant program, the 8 tourism regions of
12 the State may receive grants of up to \$100,000 per year to
promote tourism in the regions. The bill lists criteria for
determining eligibility for the grants. The program is funded
primarily by directing the Commissioner of the Department of
Economic and Community Development to use \$400,000 of the budget
of the Office of Tourism and Community Development's for grants.
The program may receive additional funds from other sources.