

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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119th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-1999

Legislative Document

No. 1172

S.P. 393

In Senate, February 9, 1999

**Resolve, Establishing a Task Force to Study the Need for an
Agricultural Vitality Zone Program.**

Reference to the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry 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 GOLDTHWAIT of Hancock.
Cosponsored by Representative COWGER of Hallowell and
Senators: NUTTING of Androscoggin, PINGREE of Knox, Representatives: PIEH of
Bremen, VOLENIK of Brooklin.

2 **Sec. 1. Task force established. Resolved:** That the Task Force to
Study the Need for an Agricultural Vitality Zone Program,
referred to in this order as the "task force," is established;
4 and be it further

6 **Sec. 2. Task force membership. Resolved:** That the task force
consists of 12 members appointed as follows:

8
10 A. The Director of the State Planning Office or the
director's designee;

12 B. The Director of the Land for Maine's Future Program;

14 C. The Commissioner of Agriculture, Food and Rural
Resources or the commissioner's designee;

16 D. The Commissioner of Economic and Community Development
or the commissioner's designee;

18 E. One representative each from the northern, eastern and
20 western Maine regional development districts, appointed by
22 the Governor;

24 F. One representative from the Finance Authority of Maine;
and

26 G. Two members of the Senate, appointed by the President of
the Senate, and 2 members of the House of Representatives,
28 appointed by the Speaker of the House; and be it further

30 **Sec. 3. Chairs. Resolved:** That the first-named Senate member
32 is the Senate chair and the first-named House member is the House
chair; and be it further

34 **Sec. 4. Appointments; convening task force. Resolved:** That all
36 appointments must be made by July 16, 1999. The Commissioner of
Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources shall call and convene the
38 first meeting of the task force no later than July 31, 1999; and
be it further

40 **Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved:** That the task force shall hold
42 public meetings, gather information, create working groups and
request necessary data from public and private entities in order
44 to accomplish the following duties:

46 A. Establish a process to identify those areas of the State
where there is substantial existing small-scale agricultural
48 activity, an evolving network of support services and
developed or developing regional markets;

2 B. Target existing and potential state resources to create
and support the development of agricultural vitality zones,
4 including: farmland conservation and protection measures;
job training programs, including beginning-farmer training
6 programs; tax credits and incentives; and grants and loans;
and

8
10 C. Identify, examine and propose strategies or measures
that will benefit and expand the State's small-scale
12 agricultural enterprises, including, but not limited to, new
marketing programs, the identification of new products and
14 services, possibilities for collaboration, the development
of spin-off or value-added businesses and the enhancement of
support services; and be it further

16
18 **Sec. 6. Staff assistance. Resolved:** That the task force may
request staffing assistance from the Department of Agriculture,
Food and Rural Resources and the State Planning Office; and be it
20 further

22 **Sec. 7. Expenses. Resolved:** That those members of the task
force who are Legislators are entitled to receive the legislative
24 per diem and reimbursement of necessary expenses for their
attendance at authorized meetings of the task force. Other
26 members of the task force who are not otherwise compensated by
their employers or other entities whom they represent are
28 entitled to receive reimbursement of necessary expenses incurred
for their attendance at authorized meetings; and be it further

30
32 **Sec. 8. Report. Resolved:** That by January 15, 2000, the task
force shall submit a report of its findings to the Joint Standing
Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry along with
34 any implementing legislation. The Joint Standing Committee on
Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry may report out any
36 legislation during the Second Regular Session of the 119th
Legislature concerning findings and recommendations of the task
38 force.

40

SUMMARY

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44 This resolve establishes the Task Force to Study the Need
for an Agricultural Vitality Zone Program.

46 The task force is required to identify areas of the State
where there is substantial existing small-scale agricultural
48 activity, definable networks of support services and regional
markets that have been or are being developed. The task force is
50 also required to target existing and potential state resources,

2 including farmland conservation and protection measures, job
training and beginning-farmer training programs, tax credits and
incentives and grants and loans, to create and support these
4 agricultural vitality zones.