

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 119th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-1999

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Legislative Document

No. 1919

H.P. 1336

House of Representatives, March 17, 1999

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### **An Act to Promote Economic Development in Eastern Maine.**

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

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph W. Mayo".

JOSEPH W. MAYO, Clerk

Presented by Representative SHOREY of Calais.  
Cosponsored by Senator CASSIDY of Washington and  
Representatives: BAGLEY of Machias, DUGAY of Cherryfield, GILLIS of Danforth,  
GOODWIN of Pembroke, WHEELER of Eliot.

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

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**CONCEPT DRAFT  
SUMMARY**

8 This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208.

10 This bill proposes to implement legislation to improve eastern Maine in the following ways. It proposes to:

12 1. Improve the infrastructure, including the development of a rail line from Brewer to Eastport within 5 years and obtain appropriations to bring U.S. Route 1 from Steuben to Danforth up to national highway standards within 10 years;

14 2. Enhance existing businesses and encourage job growth by:

16 A. Creating an enterprise zone in Washington County. The enterprise zone would be based upon the former Job Opportunity Zones Act enacted in 1987 and repealed in 1993. The purpose of the enterprise zone is to establish a program of economic development incentives targeted to areas that are economically distressed or adversely affected by sudden or severe dislocation of the economy;

18 B. Creating a free-trade zone in Calais with an extension to Eastport. This would be similar to the current authorization given to the Loring Development Authority of Maine to apply for designation as a free port area by providing an exemption from stock-in-trade tax and other taxes and customs normally levied on personal property in transit; and

20 C. Providing a General Fund appropriation in the amount of \$50,000 annually to fund an economic development specialist position. The specialist would work under the direction of the Department of Economic and Community Development in rural communities in eastern Maine to create economic opportunities by working with local development organizations. The duties of the specialist would include providing grant writing assistance, business consultation and small business development recommendations;

22 3. Attract high-tech and high-wage jobs. This would be partially accomplished through the appropriation of \$150,000 to Washington County Technical College to expand technical education programs in industries needing technically skilled workers; and

24 4. Promote a stable economic environment through the review of current rules and regulations and taxes and making any necessary changes.