

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 120th MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2001

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Legislative Document

No. 341

S.P. 115

In Senate, January 30, 2001

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### An Act to Appropriate Block Grants to Promote Regional Tourism.

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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 "Joy J. O'Brien".

JOY J. O'BRIEN  
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator MILLS of Somerset.

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

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

6 **§13073-B. 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;

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

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

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

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

26 6. Adoption of rules. In addition to the criteria in  
27 subsection 3, the office may adopt rules to develop additional  
28 criteria for the selection of grant recipients and to designate  
29 the towns to be included in the 8 regions. Rules adopted  
30 pursuant to this section are routine technical rules as defined  
31 by chapter 375, subchapter II-A.

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

## 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 region 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 Economic and  
       Community Development to use \$400,000 of the budget of the Office  
       of Tourism and Community Development for grants. The program may  
       receive additional funds from other sources.