

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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120th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2001

Legislative Document

No. 926

H.P. 711

House of Representatives, February 15, 2001

**An Act to Reform the Direct Initiative Process to Eliminate Abuses and
Provide Greater Citizen Input in the Initiative Process.**

Reference to the Committee on Legal and Veterans Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

Millicent M. MacFarland

MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND, Clerk

Presented by Representative SCHNEIDER of Durham.
Cosponsored by Representatives: BRUNO of Raymond, WESTON of Montville.

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

Sec. 1. 21-A MRSA §901, sub-§3-B, as enacted by PL 1993, c. 352, §1, is amended to read:

3-B. Approved petitions printed by voters. A voter must print the petitions in the form approved by the Secretary of State.

The petition must include in a large typeface a brief description of the proposed law, an economic impact statement and an environmental impact statement prepared by the Executive Department, State Planning Office. In preparing the description and the statements the State Planning Office shall consult with experts in the University of Maine System.

Sec. 2. 21-A MRSA §901, sub-§3-C is enacted to read:

3-C. Notice to public; appeal. As soon as the applicant has given written consent to the final language for the proposed law for a direct initiative under subsection 3-A, the Secretary of State shall provide notice to the public that a petition has been submitted and shall invite public comment on the wording of the ballot question for a period of 10 business days.

Sec. 3. 21-A MRSA §901, sub-§4, as amended by PL 1997, c. 581, §4, is further amended to read:

4. Ballot question. The ballot question for an initiative or a people's veto referendum must be drafted by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 906 and rules adopted in accordance with the Maine Administrative Procedure Act. The Secretary of State shall provide the ballot question to the applicant for a people's veto referendum within 10 business days after receipt of a properly completed application. The Secretary of State shall provide the ballot question to the applicant for an initiative within ~~10~~ 20 business days after the ~~applicant has submitted to the~~ Secretary of State ~~written consent to the final language of the proposed law~~ has provided notice to the public under subsection 3-C. The question must be conspicuously displayed on the face of the petition.

SUMMARY

This bill amends the law governing the direct initiative of legislation to require that petitions contain a description of the proposal and statements setting out the environmental and economic impacts. The bill also requires the Secretary of State to give notice to the public to allow input on the wording of

2 the ballot question. The bill adds an additional 10 days to the whole process before the final wording of the question is given to the applicant to allow for the period of public comment.