

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 121st MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2003

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Legislative Document

No. 1332

S.P. 434

In Senate, March 12, 2003

### An Act To Recognize the Maine Rural Development Council

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Reference to the Committee on State and Local Government 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 DAMON of Hancock.  
Cosponsored by Senator BENNETT of Oxford.

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

Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §12004-I, sub-§2-G is enacted to read:

2-G. Maine Rural Development Board Not Authorized 7 MRSA §152  
Agriculture

Sec. 2. 7 MRSA c. 6 is enacted to read:

**CHAPTER 6**

**MAINE RURAL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL**

**§151. Maine Rural Development Council**

The Maine Rural Development Council is a statewide association of federal, state, regional and community-based organizations active in rural development work. Membership is open to representatives of federal, state, county and municipal agencies and tribal governments, regional development organizations, nonprofit organizations, for-profit organizations and individuals interested or engaged in rural development.

**§152. Maine Rural Development Board**

1. Board establishment; authority. The Maine Rural Development Board, referred to in this chapter as "the board," established in Title 5, section 12004-I, subsection 2-G is the governing body of the Maine Rural Development Council. The board is authorized to participate on behalf of the State in the National Rural Development Partnership established in 7 United States Code 1981 and continued by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002, Public Law 107-171, 116 Stat. 205.

2. Board members. Board members serve 2-year terms and are elected from the Maine Rural Development Council membership as follows:

- A. Five members representing federal agencies;
- B. Five members representing state agencies;
- C. One member representing a regional economic development organization;
- D. One member representing county government;
- E. Two members representing municipal government;

2           F. Two members representing tribal government;

4           G. Two members from private entities with an interest in  
and commitment to rural development; and

6           H. Six members representing the public at large.

8           3. Executive director. The board shall select an executive  
10 director to serve as staff to the Maine Rural Development  
Council. The executive director is a nonvoting member of the  
12 board.

14           4. Executive officers. The board shall elect a chair,  
16 vice-chair and secretary from among its members. The chair or,  
in the chair's absence, the vice-chair shall preside over  
18 meetings of the board. An executive officer may not serve more  
than 2 consecutive terms.

20           5. Duties. The board shall:

22           A. Coordinate rural development policies, programs and  
24 activities among federal and state agencies, local and  
tribal governments, the private sector and nonprofit  
economic development and social service organizations;

26           B. Provide advocacy on the social and economic needs and  
28 issues of rural Maine communities, particularly in the most  
distressed counties of the State;

30           C. Coordinate the targeting of rural development resources  
32 to the most distressed counties;

34           D. Facilitate locally driven community development  
strategies in all rural areas of the State;

36           E. Review and comment on policies, regulations and  
38 legislative actions that affect, or would affect, rural  
communities in the State, and gather and provide related  
40 information; and

42           F. Report biannually to the Governor and the Legislature on  
44 the state of rural Maine with recommendations for future  
action and related performance benchmarks regarding  
conditions in the rural areas of the State.

46           6. Support of state agencies. The Governor shall encourage  
48 those executive departments with direct rural development  
responsibilities to provide support for the Maine Rural  
50 Development Council and the board in carrying out its duties.

2           **Sec. 3. Transition provisions.** This Act allocates in statute  
3 provisions recognizing the Maine Rural Development Council, which  
4 was initiated in 1991 by Executive Order 8, FY 91/92. It  
5 establishes the Maine Rural Development Board as the governing  
6 body of the council and authorizes the board to participate in  
7 the National Rural Development Partnership. Members of the Maine  
8 Rural Development Board and the executive director of the Maine  
9 Rural Development Council serving on the effective date of this  
10 Act continue to serve. The Maine Rural Development Council must  
11 continue to be governed in accordance with its bylaws adopted  
12 June 22, 2000 and subsequent amendment to those bylaws.

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### SUMMARY

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This bill establishes the Maine Rural Development Council in  
17 statute and designates it as the entity authorized to participate  
18 in the National Rural Development Partnership.