

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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121st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2003

Legislative Document

No. 1357

S.P. 445

In Senate, March 13, 2003

An Act To Encourage Economic Development in Piscataquis County

(AFTER DEADLINE)

(EMERGENCY)

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 205.

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 DAVIS of Piscataquis.
Cosponsored by Representative ANNIS of Dover-Foxcroft and
Representatives: DUPREY of Medway, PEAVEY-HASKELL of Greenbush, RICHARDSON
of Greenville.

2 **Emergency preamble.** Whereas, Acts of the Legislature do not
become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted
as emergencies; and

4
6 **Whereas,** recent Dexter Shoe and Great Northern Paper, Inc.
plant closings in the Town of Dexter, the Town of Millinocket and
the Town of East Millinocket have resulted in the loss of more
8 than 1,600 manufacturing jobs in Penobscot County and adjacent
portions of Piscataquis County; and

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12 **Whereas,** prior to the recent plant closings, the rate of
unemployment in Piscataquis County exceeded the statewide
unemployment rate; and

14
16 **Whereas,** there is a need to expand and diversify employment
opportunities in Piscataquis County to mitigate the adverse
economic effects of the Dexter Shoe and Great Northern Paper,
18 Inc. plant closings; and

20 **Whereas,** the organized towns of Piscataquis County
individually lack the tax base and financial resources to
22 effectively encourage new economic development; and

24 **Whereas,** there is a need to encourage regional economic
development efforts in Piscataquis County; and

26
28 **Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts
create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of
Maine and require the following legislation as immediately
30 necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and
safety; now, therefore,

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

34 **Sec. 1. 30-A MRSA §125** is enacted to read:

36 **§125. Economic development**

38 **1. Budget authority.** Subject to the provisions of chapter
40 3, subchapter 1, article 6, the county commissioners of
Piscataquis County may raise, appropriate, borrow and expend
42 money for the purposes of county economic development, subject to
the following provisions and limitations.

44 **A.** As used in this section, "county economic development"
46 means assisting or encouraging the creation or preservation
of new or existing employment opportunities for residents of
48 Piscataquis County, or any of its municipalities, through
one or more of the following activities:

2 (1) Development of new sites for the physical
4 location, settlement or resettlement of new or expanded
6 manufacturing, fishing, commercial or other business
8 enterprises to be located within the county, including
payment of related costs for surveying, land
acquisition, land use and environmental permitting,
engineering, legal services and infrastructure
development;

10 (2) Constructing or financing the development of new
12 community industrial buildings, as defined in Title 5,
14 section 13120-B, to be located within Piscataquis
County;

16 (3) Redevelopment of existing structures located
18 within the county for commercial, industrial or mixed
use;

20 (4) Construction, financing or operating assistance to
22 necessary publicly owned transportation facilities,
including facilities for passenger and cargo
transportation;

24 (5) Provision of local matching funds for any state or
26 federal transportation project, community development
28 grant or rural development grant to the county or any
30 of its municipalities, intended to achieve purposes
substantially similar to those listed in subparagraphs
(1) to (4);

32 (6) Financial participation in any economic
34 development project organized or funded on a regional
36 basis by 2 or more political subdivisions or state or
38 federal agencies. For this purpose, the county
40 commissioners may provide assistance to a regional
project to be located in whole or in part outside of
Piscataquis County only upon a finding by the
commissioners that the project will confer a
substantial economic benefit on Piscataquis County;

42 (7) Funding the annual salary and operating expenses
44 of a county economic development officer, development
agency or development office; and

46 (8) Necessary contractual services for any of the
purposes stated in this paragraph.

48 B. All borrowing by the county commissioners for the
50 purposes of this section is subject to the following
limitations.

2 (1) All bonds issued by the county commissioners for
3 the purposes of this section must be approved prior to
4 issuance by the voters of Piscataquis County by
5 referendum vote in accordance with section 938, except
6 that a referendum for this purpose may be conducted at
7 any regular or special county election at which the
8 total number of votes cast for and against the proposed
9 bond issue is equal to 50% of the total number of votes
10 cast in Piscataquis County for all gubernatorial
11 candidates in the most recent gubernatorial election.

12 (2) The aggregate unpaid principal amount of all bonds
13 issued under this section may not exceed 2% of the most
14 recent taxable valuation of Piscataquis County, as
15 certified by the State Tax Assessor pursuant to Title
16 36, section 381, adjusted to 100%.

17 (3) Debt may not be incurred or bonds issued under
18 this section if such debt or bonds, in combination with
19 other county debt then outstanding, would cause
20 Piscataquis County to exceed limitations on total
21 county debt otherwise provided by law.

22 (4) All bonds issued under this section must be for
23 capital project costs only and may not be used to fund
24 the annual operating or program expenses of any agency,
25 facility, program or office. The commissioners shall
26 deposit the proceeds of any bond issued under this
27 section to a capital project account for the project
28 concerned, established in accordance with section 921.
29 Bond proceeds deposited to a capital project account
30 may only be used for purposes of financing or
31 completing the project concerned and for no other
32 purposes. Any funds remaining in the capital project
33 account upon completion or termination of the project
34 concerned must be used by the commissioners to prepay
35 any debt incurred by the county for that project. If
36 the terms of a particular bond issued under this
37 section prohibit prepayment of the bond, any funds
38 remaining in the capital project account upon
39 completion or termination of the project concerned may
40 be transferred to another capital project account or
41 used to retire other county debt.

42 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the
43 preamble, this Act takes effect when approved.

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SUMMARY

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This bill authorizes the county commissioners of Piscataquis County to raise, appropriate, borrow and spend money for the purposes of economic development in Piscataquis County.