

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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124th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2009

Legislative Document

No. 955

S.P. 360

In Senate, March 10, 2009

An Act To Transform the Maine Economy and Create Jobs

Reference to the Joint Select Committee on Maine's Energy Future 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 President MITCHELL of Kennebec.
Cospponsored by Representative MARTIN of Eagle Lake and
Senators: BARTLETT of Cumberland, HOBBS of York, NUTTING of Androscoggin,
RAYE of Washington, Representatives: FITTS of Pittsfield, HINCK of Portland, ROTUNDO
of Lewiston, TARDY of Newport.

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

2 **CONCEPT DRAFT**

3 **SUMMARY**

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

5 This bill proposes to create the Energy Trust Authority under the Governor's Office
6 of Energy Independence and Security. The purpose of the authority is to actively pursue
7 and negotiate opportunities to transform the State into the greenest and healthiest state
8 and to create jobs through:

9 1. Actively pursuing opportunities to lease portions of the State's highways and
10 rights-of-way, including Interstate 95 and the Maine Turnpike, for the transmission of
11 energy, including electricity, natural gas or other fossil fuel;

12 2. Ensuring the interconnection between the State's major transit systems of rail,
13 ports and highways to maximize the State's connection to the national and international
14 economy; and

15 3. Developing and implementing specific programs that ensure the State's reduction
16 of its carbon footprint and greatly expanding healthy opportunities for the people and
17 businesses of this State.

18 This bill proposes to use the funds generated through the lease of state assets to
19 support a revenue bond to fund:

20 1. Interest-free revolving loan programs to fund weatherization and conversion of
21 heating systems for both commercial and residential sectors, with the goal of moving the
22 State's energy use from fossil fuel to green energy, specifically green electricity. This
23 conversion will include greatly expanded use of technologies like geothermal and cold-
24 weather heat exchangers. The revolving loan fund will be managed by transmission and
25 distribution utility companies, who have administrative mechanisms for claims and
26 billing already established with each household and building owner;

27 2. Expanding research and development into wind power, specifically offshore wind.
28 The funds will be used to vertically integrate the wind industry in the State, including
29 development and production of turbines, blades, stanchions and offshore platforms.
30 Funds will be provided to the University of Maine System, the Maine Community
31 College System and the Maine Technology Institute to expand research capacity, develop
32 an educated and skilled workforce, expand business opportunities and create partnerships
33 with local, national and international companies with expertise and capacity in offshore
34 wind development;

35 3. Development of the Maine Expansion Fund to provide flexible funding for
36 companies seeking to expand, start or locate in the State. The Maine Expansion Fund
37 will be used to assist companies involved with targeted technologies, as defined in the

1 Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, section 15301, subsection 2, with grants or loans for
2 infrastructure, training support and other financing. Eligible companies receiving funds
3 must create net new jobs that pay at least the average labor market weekly wage and
4 provide at least a 50% employer-paid health care benefit, paid sick leave and access to an
5 approved retirement plan. Eligible companies receiving funds must build or renovate
6 their facilities to meet the highest energy efficiency standard to minimize their carbon
7 footprint;

8 4. Expanding research and development into food production to make the State the
9 food basket of the Northeast. Funds will be provided to the University of Maine System,
10 the Maine Community College System and the Maine Technology Institute to expand
11 research capacity, develop an educated and skilled workforce, expand business
12 opportunities and create partnerships with local, national and international companies
13 with expertise and capacity in food production and the promotion of the Maine brand;

14 5. Creation of a virtual medical school in the State. Funds will be used to expand
15 opportunities for medical education and graduate school opportunities, as well as research
16 capacity, that develop the State as a laboratory for health and wellness while establishing
17 a relationship with the United States Department of Health and Human Services, National
18 Institutes of Health to fund the research and development of the State as a laboratory for
19 improving health and wellness for the country. The creation of a virtual medical school
20 will be furthered by using partnerships within the State, through hospitals, educational
21 institutions and research facilities, and medical schools outside of the State;

22 6. Expanding the State's transportation system, including mass transit, to ensure the
23 flow of goods and services and decrease the State's transportation carbon footprint by
24 expanded utilization of ports, rails and other transit opportunities; and

25 7. Development of the privately funded East-West Highway and utility corridor to
26 improve connectivity of the Northeast to the heartland of the United States and the
27 international marketplace.

28 The Energy Trust Authority will consist of the following voting members:

29 1. The Public Advocate;

30 2. The Director of the Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security;

31 3. The Chief Executive Officer of the Finance Authority of Maine;

32 4. A commissioner of the Public Utilities Commission;

33 5. A representative from the University of Maine System;

34 6. A representative from the Maine Community College System;

35 7. The Commissioner of Economic and Community Development or the
36 commissioner's designee;

37 8. The Commissioner of Transportation or the commissioner's designee;

1 9. Four public members representing industry, labor, environmental groups, the
2 health care industry and agriculture, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the
3 Legislature; and

4 10. Four Legislators, 2 Senators appointed by the President of the Senate and 2
5 House members appointed by the Speaker of the House.

6 The Energy Trust Authority will be a quasi-state entity, with the broad powers to
7 accomplish its purpose, including the power to develop and implement programs, enter
8 into contracts with public and private entities to accomplish the purpose of the authority,
9 issue revenue bonds through the Maine Municipal Bond Bank, contract with the Finance
10 Authority of Maine or other entities to provide loans or grant funds, develop and adopt
11 rules, set standards for energy efficiency and weatherization funded by the authority,
12 retain certain confidential information under provisions similar to the Finance Authority
13 of Maine's confidentiality exemptions and exercise other responsibilities possessed by
14 and enjoy protections provided to other authorities under state law.