

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2021

Legislative Document

No. 1280

H.P. 940

House of Representatives, March 29, 2021

An Act To Bolster Rural Economies

Received by the Clerk of the House on March 25, 2021. Referred to the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative COLLINGS of Portland.
Cosponsored by Representatives: ALLEY of Beals, LANDRY of Farmington, PERRY of Calais, TUELL of East Machias, Senators: MOORE of Washington, STEWART of Aroostook.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §10911** is enacted to read:

3 **§10911. Maine Rural Economy Future Development Program**

4 **1. Program established.** The Maine Rural Economy Future Development Program,
5 referred to in this section as "the program," is established within the university to promote
6 future business development in rural Maine through the creation of programs that provide
7 course offerings on the economy of rural Maine.

8 **2. Campus participation; required.** As part of the program, the University of Maine
9 at Fort Kent, the University of Maine at Presque Isle, the University of Maine at Machias
10 and the University of Maine at Farmington shall each create and offer a program that
11 provides a comprehensive study of the rural economy of Maine and that promotes the
12 partnering of students with businesses in rural Maine.

13 **3. Program criteria.** The program must:

14 A. Provide each student with compensation, health care, a housing voucher and student
15 loan forgiveness in exchange for work at the respective campus; and

16 B. On a biennial basis, allow for up to 3 students from each campus required to offer
17 a program under subsection 2 to be selected to work for 2 years on rural economic
18 growth once the students graduate.

19 **Sec. 2. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and
20 allocations are made.

21 **UNIVERSITY OF MAINE SYSTEM, BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF THE**
22 **Maine Rural Economy Future Development Program N351**

23 Initiative: Provides ongoing annual funds of \$500,000 each to the University of Maine at
24 Fort Kent, the University of Maine at Presque Isle, the University of Maine at Machias and
25 the University of Maine at Farmington to establish and implement the Maine Rural
26 Economy Future Development Program established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title
27 20-A, section 10911. Funds appropriated to this program do not lapse but must be carried
28 forward into the next fiscal year to be used only for the purpose for which the funds were
29 provided.

30 GENERAL FUND	2021-22	2022-23
31 All Other	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000
32		
33 GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000

34 **SUMMARY**

35 This bill establishes the Maine Rural Economy Future Development Program within
36 the University of Maine System to promote future business development in rural Maine by
37 providing course offerings on the economy of rural Maine. The bill requires the University
38 of Maine at Fort Kent, the University of Maine at Presque Isle, the University of Maine at
39 Machias and the University of Maine at Farmington to each create and offer a program that
40 provides a comprehensive study of the rural economy of Maine and that promotes the
41 partnering of students with businesses in rural Maine. The bill specifies that the program

1 must include provisions that, on a biennial basis, allow for up to 3 students from each
2 campus required to implement the program to be selected to work for 2 years on rural
3 economic growth once they graduate and that provide each student with compensation,
4 health care, a housing voucher and student loan forgiveness in exchange for work at the
5 respective campus. The bill also provides General Fund appropriations of \$2,000,000 per
6 year, with each of the 4 campuses required to establish and implement the program
7 receiving \$500,000 annually.