

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Date: 3/13/24

(Filing No. S-577)

AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

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STATE OF MAINE

SENATE

131ST LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" to S.P. 511, L.D. 1274, "An Act to Increase Land Access for Historically Disadvantaged Populations"

Amend the bill by striking out the title and substituting the following:

'Resolve, to Establish the Task Force to Support Commercial Dairy Farms in the State'

Amend the bill by striking out everything after the title and inserting the following:

'Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, market instability, labor shortages, inflation, limits on milk production, supply chain delays and distribution disruptions are driving dairy farmers in the State out of business; and

Whereas, the State has lost approximately 1/3 of its dairy farms since 2020, and dairy farms are integral to the State's rural communities and agricultural economy; and

Whereas, this resolve establishes the Task Force to Support Commercial Dairy Farms in the State to study and report on these issues; and

Whereas, it is necessary to immediately begin the work to examine the dairy stabilization program, also known as the tier program, to determine what can be done to strengthen the program and to address some of the challenges to its success; and

Whereas, this legislation must take effect before the expiration of the 90-day period in order to complete the study and make recommendations to the Legislature; and

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 necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore, be it

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT

- 1 **Sec. 1. Task force established. Resolved:** That the Task Force to Support
 2 Commercial Dairy Farms in the State, referred to in this resolve as "the task force," is
 3 established.
- 4 **Sec. 2. Task force membership. Resolved:** That the task force consists of at least
 5 10 members and no more than 15 members, one of whom is the Commissioner of
 6 Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry or the commissioner's designee. The commissioner
 7 shall invite the following to participate as members of the task force:
- 8 1. The chair of the board of directors of the Maine Dairy Industry Association or the
 9 chair's designee;
 - 10 2. The Executive Director of the Maine Milk Commission;
 - 11 3. One representative of a milk processor;
 - 12 4. One representative of a Maine milk retailer familiar with dairy purchasing on the
 13 national market;
 - 14 5. One representative from each of the 4 milk pricing tiers;
 - 15 6. An economist with expertise in dairy markets and policy; and
 - 16 7. At the discretion of the commissioner, up to 5 additional at-large members, who
 17 may be invited if they possess specific knowledge or technical skills useful for
 18 accomplishing the duties of the task force.
- 19 **Sec. 3. Convening of task force; chair. Resolved:** That all invitations to join the
 20 task force must be made pursuant to section 2 no later than 30 days following the effective
 21 date of this resolve. The commissioner or commissioner's designee shall call and convene
 22 the first meeting of the task force, at which the members shall elect a member to serve as
 23 chair.
- 24 **Sec. 4. Compensation. Resolved:** That members of the task force are not entitled
 25 to reimbursement for their expenses.
- 26 **Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved:** That the task force shall review and provide
 27 recommendations on potential investments and policies to support the long-term
 28 sustainability and resiliency of the State's dairy sector, including but not limited to:
- 29 1. The development of in-state milk processing capacity, including for value-added
 30 products;
 - 31 2. The development of new or enhancements to existing state grant, loan and other
 32 funding support programs, market development and access programs and technical
 33 assistance programs; and
 - 34 3. Recommendations to preserve and enhance the effectiveness of the current dairy
 35 stabilization program, also known as the tier program, established in the Maine Revised
 36 Statutes, Title 7, section 3153-B.
- 37 The department may work with a 3rd-party organization to accomplish these duties if
 38 existing resources allow.
- 39 **Sec. 6. Staff assistance. Resolved:** That, within existing resources, the Department
 40 of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall provide staffing services to the task force.



Approved: 03/05/24 *MAC*

131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

LD 1274

LR 2093(02)

An Act to Increase Land Access for Historically Disadvantaged Populations

Fiscal Note for Bill as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (5577)
Committee: Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Fiscal Note Required: Yes

Fiscal Note

Minor cost increase - General Fund

Fiscal Detail and Notes

Any additional costs to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to implement the provisions of this bill are expected to be minor and can be absorbed within existing budgeted resources.