

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2023

Legislative Document

No. 1965

H.P. 1262

House of Representatives, May 18, 2023

**An Act to Authorize the Secretary of State to Provide a New
General Issue of License Plates**

(AFTER DEADLINE)

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

Reference to the Committee on Transportation suggested and ordered printed.

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

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative WILLIAMS of Bar Harbor.
Cosponsored by Representatives: ALBERT of Madawaska, ANKELES of Brunswick,
CRAFTS of Newcastle, O'CONNELL of Brewer, PARRY of Arundel, THERIAULT of Fort
Kent, WHITE of Waterville, Senator: FARRIN of Somerset.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 29-A MRSA §451, sub-§1-A**, as enacted by PL 1995, c. 645, Pt. C, §1 and
3 affected by §16, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

4 **1-A. New general issue.** The Secretary of State shall provide for a new general issue
5 of registration plates and shall begin issuing the new plates no later than May 1, 2025. The
6 Secretary of State shall complete the issuance of new plates before July 31, 2026 to all
7 vehicles required to obtain new plates.

8 **Sec. 2. 29-A MRSA §451, sub-§4, ¶A**, as enacted by PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2
9 and affected by Pt. B, §5, is amended to read:

10 A. Registration plates must bear the year of issue or the last 2 numerals of that year
11 and the word "Maine" ~~or the abbreviation "Me."~~ in letters of at least 3/4 inch in height
12 centered at the top of the registration plate.

13 **Sec. 3. 29-A MRSA §451, sub-§4-A**, as enacted by PL 1997, c. 311, §1, is repealed
14 and the following enacted in its place:

15 **4-A. New general issue design.** Notwithstanding subsection 4, the design of
16 registration plates issued pursuant to subsection 1-A is governed by this subsection.

17 A. Registration plates must bear the year of issue or the last 2 numerals of that year
18 and the word "Maine" in letters of at least 3/4 inch in height centered at the top of the
19 registration plate.

20 B. Except on motorcycle plates, registration numbers may not be substantially less
21 than 3 inches high.

22 C. On registration plates issued for private use and trucks, the word "Vacationland"
23 must be centered at the bottom in letters not less than 3/4 inch in height, except when
24 the Secretary of State determines that, for other than passenger vehicles, that space may
25 be used for class codes.

26 D. A new registration plate must have:

27 (1) A neutral shaded background that does not interfere with any identifying
28 characteristics on the plate;

29 (2) Identification numbers and letters and a distinct border; and

30 (3) An illustration of the flag design for the State from 1901 to 1909. The plate
31 must have a buff background with a green pine tree and a blue star on the side of
32 the plate and must not obstruct any identifying features on the plate.

33 E. The Secretary of State shall devise, with the advice of the joint standing committee
34 of the Legislature having jurisdiction over transportation matters, a numbering system
35 suitable for a new general issue of registration plates.

36 **Sec. 4. 29-A MRSA §451, sub-§6**, as amended by PL 1995, c. 645, Pt. C, §3, is
37 further amended to read:

38 **6. Plates to be manufactured at State Prison Bolduc Correctional Facility.** The
39 Secretary of State or the duly designated official in charge of vehicle registration shall
40 purchase and cause to be installed at the ~~State Prison~~ Bolduc Correctional Facility the

1 necessary equipment and materials for the production of all vehicle registration plates used
2 in the State. Only plates that ~~can not~~ cannot be produced at ~~the prison~~ Bolduc Correctional
3 Facility and plates for which anticipated demand is below a minimum number determined
4 by the Secretary of State may be purchased for state use.

5 The Warden of the State Prison has charge of operations at the ~~State Prison~~ Bolduc
6 Correctional Facility relative to the manufacture of all plates made for the State. The
7 Warden of the State Prison, with the consent of the Secretary of State, may employ for
8 limited periods of time a supervisor for the purpose of instructing ~~inmates~~ residents in the
9 operation of making such plates.

10 For purposes of this subsection, "resident" means an individual who resides in the Bolduc
11 Correctional Facility.

12 **Sec. 5. 29-A MRSA §461, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2019, c. 352, §1, is further
13 amended to read:

14 **1. Plate issue year.** In a year in which new registration plates are issued, the Secretary
15 of State shall reserve ~~until July 1st~~ for one year the same registration number for the
16 succeeding registration year for a person who notifies in writing the Secretary of State ~~prior~~
17 ~~to May 1st~~ of that person's desire to retain that registration number. The fee for retention
18 of the same registration number is \$25.

19 The Secretary of State may issue a facsimile plate that is valid for a 90-day period during
20 production of a reserved plate. A facsimile plate must be attached to the rear plate bracket.

21 ~~If a person does not have a vehicle to register on May 1st, a registration number may be~~
22 ~~held for a maximum of 2 registration years by depositing with the Secretary of State \$25~~
23 ~~for each year. This fee is not refundable and may not be applied against the registration fee.~~

24 ~~All numbers other than those reserved must be released and may be issued after July 1st~~ 6
25 months after the plate issue is complete.

26 ~~A person wishing to select a number out of rotation may do so by paying the registration~~
27 ~~fee and a reserved number fee of \$25.~~

28 SUMMARY

29 This bill directs the Secretary of State to provide for a new general issue of registration
30 plates beginning May 1, 2025 with an illustration of the flag design for the State from 1901
31 to 1909 that has a buff background with a green pine tree and a blue star on the side of the
32 plate.