

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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ACTS, RESOLVES AND CONSTITUTIONAL RESOLUTIONS

AS PASSED BY THE

One Hundred and Sixth Legislature

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE

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Messages
of
Governor Kenneth M. Curtis
to the
One Hundred and Sixth Legislature
January 18, 1973
January 30, 1973

SPECIAL MESSAGE ON LEGISLATION
BY KENNETH M. CURTIS, GOVERNOR OF MAINE
TO THE ONE HUNDRED SIXTH LEGISLATURE

JANUARY 30, 1973

STATE OF MAINE,
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

AUGUSTA, MAINE
04330

KENNETH M. CURTIS
GOVERNOR



January 30, 1973

To the Senate and House of Representatives
of the 106th Legislature:

Today, in accordance with my Constitutional duty, I am submitting a message describing legislation that will be submitted for your consideration.

It contains proposals which supplement those in my Budget Message delivered to you on January 11 and my written Tax Reform Message presented on January 18.

Respectfully,

Kenneth M. Curtis

Governor

I. INTRODUCTION

I am pleased to submit to the 106th Maine Legislature my legislative program for the coming biennium.

This program has been developed from over a thousand requests and ideas to come before me in the past several months. The sources were many and varied. They included the platforms of both political parties, requests of State agencies, and suggestions by many legislators, private citizens and private groups.

In selecting proposals to be included in this Message as supplements to the major recommendations of my budget and tax reform messages, I concentrated on those to strengthen human service programs, improving employment opportunities, safeguarding the environment and making State government more effective.

I believe the recommendations of this Message to be both responsive to our needs and realistic in terms of what we can and should accomplish this legislative session. I think the recommendations represent a sound framework for legislative action, to be complemented by the many individual proposals you will receive from other sources. I shall welcome your support as well as your criticism, your contributions and suggestions in producing a final plan of action for serving Maine and its people in the next two years.

II. HUMAN RESOURCES

Economic Development

Recently the State's role as a guarantor of economic development loans under the Maine Industrial Building Authority and Maine Recreational Act programs has been reexamined. While administration of these programs has at times been criticized, the basic concept has proven sound not only in Maine but in many other states. These programs have helped many Maine businesses which otherwise could not get credit. With our high unemployment, we can scarcely afford to forego this kind of job producing assistance. I believe most of the difficulties can be traced to inadequate staff resources to handle the multi-million dollar proposals these agencies process.

Accordingly, to give these programs the professional staff support they require and to improve coordination, I recommend the consolidation of MRA and MIBA with the Maine Securities Approval Board, and also unification of their three separate staffs under the Department of Commerce and Industry.

I further propose strengthening the Municipal Industrial and Recreational Obligations Act by authorizing municipalities to form development commissions with power to finance economic development projects through bond issues approved by local referendum. This will enable municipalities to more effectively plan and implement programs to improve local economic conditions. I also support an act enabling the State to construct manufacturing plant facilities under proper guidelines throughout neglected economic areas in the State of Maine.

The revolution in maritime commerce in recent years means that Maine can earn major economic benefits by having ocean port facilities

equal to the transportation needs of modern business. While we still have far to go in this direction, the Department of Transportation through the Maine Port Authority has made a firm start, particularly in its plans for a containerport facility at Portland for which I have requested funding by this Legislature.

The development of Maine's ports also requires a modern Port Authority with powers equal to the challenge. I will submit legislation to improve and codify the Maine Port Authority laws, and to equip the Port Authority for the special role it will be called on to perform in respect to any future major oil terminal as mentioned in the Environmental Protection section of this Message.

Educational and Cultural Services

The Legislature has previously approved the construction of 13 regional vocational education centers enrolling 6,937 students. A recent study confirms the value of technical vocational education and recommends this opportunity be extended to all secondary students. For this reason, I will support legislation permitting 12 additional regional centers to make vocational education available in all sections of the State.

Transportation to the regional vocational centers is required of school administrative districts but is not required of municipalities. To avoid this inequity and in order to make vocational education more readily available, I support legislation creating a uniform law requiring both districts and municipalities to provide transportation to regional vocational centers.

The State Board of Education should be granted authority to approve satellite centers for vocational education. The purpose of this proposal is to extend vocational education by using local secondary school shop facilities in connection with programs operated by the regional vocational centers. The programs would be directed by the regional centers. In this way facilities would be used to the maximum, duplication would be avoided, and vocational opportunities extended to more students.

In addition, I will support legislation to permit bilingual education beyond grade two. Since Congress has authorized funds for bilingual education, no additional appropriation is required. An abundance of research indicates children taught to read and write in the language of their home, and then taught in English are more fluent in both languages than under the present system. Further, given our growing ties to Quebec and Europe, there can be little doubt of the wisdom of encouraging bilingual education.

Finally, I will recommend the State Constitution and the Maine School Building Authority Act be amended to allow the Maine School Building Authority to finance buildings for public and private institutions of higher education and public post-secondary business, trade, vocational and technical schools. Financing would be accomplished through the issuance of revenue bonds. I believe this proposal would financially strengthen our post-secondary institutions and, thereby, increase educational opportunities for Maine people.

Consumer Protection

In the area of consumer protection I will support legislation enacting Maine's Consumer Credit Code, legislation to regulate the sale of motor vehicles and the financing of insurance premiums, and legislation establishing a Maine Public Power Authority.

The growth of America's economy in the last 20 years has largely been the result of the expansion of credit to consumers. Consumers now account for nearly 70 percent of the total national income expenditures. The amount of consumer credit has risen from less than six billion dollars in 1945 to over one hundred and thirty-five billion dollars in 1971. However, with this growth has come a high frequency of questionable lending practices which exploit both the consumer and the merchant to the sole benefit of the lending intermediary. To protect Maine's consumers against abuses in the area of consumer credit, I support the adoption of the Maine Consumer Credit Code. The code would expand the present protection of Maine law by adding new consumer protection against referral sales agreements, over-zealous debt collection and excessive interest rates on credit card accounts. Most important, the code establishes an administrator with full investigative and enforcement powers to work full-time for the protection of the Maine consumer. This position will be self-financing through fees on creditors.

Another fast-growing and presently unregulated consumer credit business is insurance premium financing. At present neither the interest rates nor the rights and obligations of the parties are adequately defined. I therefore propose adoption through either the Maine Consumer Credit Code or a separate Insurance Premium Finance Company Act to give the Insurance Commissioner power to protect Maine consumers in this field also.

I further support legislation which improves the Motor Vehicle and Dealer Laws and adds additional protection for the consumer by more clearly defining licensing procedures for motor vehicle dealers and regulating vehicle transportation by dealers within the State.

In addition, I support legislation and the petition drive to establish the Power Authority of Maine which would reduce our high electric bills and meet our growing power demands.

The Power Authority of Maine would be authorized to generate and wholesale electricity to our private utilities which would continue to distribute electricity to consumers. This legislation would result neither in the take-over of our utilities nor the loss of local real estate taxes.

The Power Authority of Maine would generate electricity less expensively for three principal reasons: 1) the cost of financing new generating facilities would be much cheaper due to tax-exempt bonds; 2) the Power Authority of Maine would not have to pay income taxes or turn a profit; and 3) would have no advertising or lobbying costs.

We would do well to observe the precedent set by Quebec and New Brunswick, where public power has been in successful operation for many years, which now export large amounts of electric power to New England.

An area of rapid technological change and potentially revolutionary public impact in which the State's vital interests have not been ade-

quately represented is telecommunications. Also, there is a growing special need to provide guidance and support to our municipalities in the development of cable television systems. Therefore, I will support legislation to establish a telecommunications unit with authority to prepare a State telecommunications plan, represent the State before the Federal Communications Commission, and aid municipalities in telecommunications matters including the regulation of certain aspects of cable television.

To guarantee the reliability of insurance companies authorized to do business in this State and to ensure that the hard earned savings of our citizens will not be dissipated through improper management, I recommend you approve an interim commission to study our insurance insolvency laws.

Social Services

I support legislation to increase benefits to Maine's senior citizens under the Elderly Householder's Tax Relief Law. Specifically, the income limit should be increased; the formula for computing the refund should be modified so as to tie it directly to the property taxes or rent charged; the age requirement should be reduced to 62 for both men and women; and the value of the homestead should be excluded in computing total assets.

In order to provide an expanded and more constant market for blind-made products and, thereby, assist handicapped citizens to achieve maximum personal independence, I support legislation to provide for the sale of blind-made products through the Maine Institution for the Blind to the State of Maine and its political subdivisions.

Lead poisoning represents a serious menace to the health of the public, especially our children. I support legislation designed to regulate the sale, application, removal and disposal of lead-based substances by requiring the Department of Health and Welfare to adopt and publish rules and regulations designed to eradicate lead poisoning.

In order that alcoholics and intoxicated persons may not be subject to criminal prosecution solely because of their consumption of alcoholic beverages, but rather should be afforded appropriate treatment, I support legislation creating the Uniform Alcoholism and Intoxication Treatment Act. This Act will provide continuing treatment for alcoholics in order that they may lead normal and productive lives. Funds to start this program have been included in my Supplemental Budget.

Human Rights

I recommend you ratify the Equal Rights Amendment to the United States Constitution prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex. In compliance with the Amendment, it will be necessary to review the laws of Maine to alter or eliminate those that discriminate on the basis of sex.

I also support legislation to amend Maine's Human Rights Law to place discrimination on the basis of sex within its jurisdiction. In

order to give the Human Rights Commission the tools needed to fulfill its statutory duty, I recommend legislation be enacted to ensure the Commission has access to any evidence of any person or firm being investigated that relates to unlawful discrimination covered by this Act.

Our efforts to restore to Maine's Indians the quality of life we all deserve and desire must continue. In recognizing the needs of those Indians who reside on our State reservations, however, we should not neglect the special problems which confront Indians who do not live on our reservations. For this reason, I recommend you authorize and fund within the Department of Indian Affairs an office to assist off-reservation Indians.

In addition, I ask the Legislature to again consider the issuance of free hunting and fishing licenses to off-reservation Indians.

Police services on the three State reservations can be immediately improved with more than \$85,000 in Federal grants. Unfortunately, the availability of this Federal assistance is contingent upon the enactment of legislation to centralize the police system for the reservations. I recommend the Legislature approve this step in promoting independence of the several tribes.

In order that tribally elected Indian Representatives be accorded a stronger voice in the operation of State government, I will support legislation providing Indian representatives with speaking privileges in the State House of Representatives.

Housing

The Federal government froze all housing subsidy programs in the first week of 1973. It then removed price controls on rentals and materials. This double move will cause housing costs to rise while available government assistance collapses. In Maine, where more than half of conventional housing construction in recent years has been subsidized in one way or another, this will cripple the market. To meet the Federal challenge, I recommend the Legislature increase the current housing revenue bond limitation to \$100 million. In addition, if Federal relief is not forthcoming, the Legislature should consider additional action to maintain an adequately subsidized housing program.

For rental housing, I recommend our fair housing laws be amended to prohibit discrimination on account of family size or source of income.

In a related measure, I support legislation to clearly enumerate the grounds for eviction of a tenant and to provide workable guidelines for landlords, tenants, and the judiciary as to when a tenancy at will is to be terminated.

Labor

To provide a realistic floor for wages in the State of Maine, I will support legislation to increase the minimum wage to two dollars an hour.

Maine workers and their families deserve adequate and fair protection in case of work-related injury, disease or death. In this regard I

recommend several improvements in Maine's Workmen's Compensation Law. Coverage under Workmen's Compensation should be made compulsory with adequate enforcement provisions; many of the traditional exemptions under Workmen's Compensation should be eliminated, particularly exemptions for small employers. The exemption under Workmen's Compensation now accorded to farm labor should be limited only to those farmers whose total annual payroll does not exceed a certain figure; the maximum weekly wage benefit should be increased to 100% of the State's average weekly wage; and the waiting period should be reduced from 7 to 3 days.

In order to mitigate the financial impact of these recommendations on the small employer, provision should be made, if possible, to ease the burden of large premium payments on the small employer.

To assure safe and healthful working conditions for Maine's working men and women, I support legislation authorizing the Department of Manpower Affairs and the Department of Health and Welfare to administer an occupational safety and health program meeting the requirements of the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970. This legislation will also create an Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission in the Department of Manpower Affairs to hear appeals from decisions of State officials administering the program.

In the area of unemployment compensation, I support legislation to amend the Employment Security Law to provide a more equitable system of maintaining the Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund which will ensure the level of the Fund is kept at a minimum safety level, to enable the State to take advantage of Federal assistance in extending unemployment insurance benefits whenever the Federal program allows, and to repeal a provision which discriminates against workers in seasonal employment.

In addition, I recommend legislation to reorganize the Department of Manpower Affairs giving the Commissioner clear and sole responsibility for administrative functions of the Employment Security Program. The Commission would continue to serve as an appeals and policy-making body.

Veterans Services

As Governor, I have always believed that special recognition should be made of the service and sacrifice rendered by our war veterans. To that end, early in 1971 I ordered formation of a Veterans Task Force to study the problems of returning Vietnam-era veterans and to make recommendations to solve their problems and ease their return to civilian life. Many of those recommendations in the fields of jobs, education, training and veterans benefits have been implemented.

The special session of the 105th Legislature proposed a Constitutional Amendment allowing the State to guarantee small business loans for veterans. This Constitutional Amendment was passed by the voters by a majority of nearly 4 to 1. I now recommend passage of appropriate legislation to implement the details and mechanics of this program.

Public Safety

The death toll on Maine's highways continues at an intolerable level despite our many attempts to reduce traffic fatalities. For this reason, in addition to the items mentioned in my Budget Message, I will support legislation to:

Expand vision testing for renewal of licenses;

Revise and upgrade our laws regarding safety standards for school buses;

Provide for classification of licenses and to prohibit the operation of vehicles in classifications for which the driver is not licensed; and

Amend our Financial Responsibility Law to permit hearings by statute.

The disastrous floods which struck other parts of the country this past summer illustrate the need for flood prevention procedures in Maine. Especially important in this regard is a bill which would provide for the inspection of dams and reservoirs throughout the State. While Federal funds are available for inspection, it may be necessary to appropriate additional funds from State sources.

III. NATURAL RESOURCES

Environmental Protection

In the field of environmental protection, I recommend the proposed Environmental Bill of Rights be passed by the Legislature and referred to the electorate for approval.

In addition, I recommend enactment of a Maine Solid Waste Management Act. This proposal would require municipalities to assume responsibility, subject to regulation at the State level, for the orderly disposal of all solid waste except that generated by industry or by waste water treatment plants.

In a related area, I suggest a small disposal fee be assessed on new automobile sales to assist the Department of Environmental Protection in funding projects designed to solve the especially difficult problems we encounter in disposing of junk cars in Maine.

To anticipate and prevent degradation of the Great Ponds, I suggest the Department of Environmental Protection be authorized to develop a method for defining and restoring appropriate water quality to bodies of water ten acres or larger in size.

Finally, to comply with Federal requirements, it is imperative that the Legislature adopt the air quality control standards and regulations which the State Board of Environmental Protection has carefully articulated over the past few years.

To reduce the environmental problems, uncertainty, and expense which the State has incurred as a result of the numerous oil port and other heavy industrial proposals made for the coastal zone in recent years, to conserve the Maine coast for future generations and to carry out the basic recommendations of the Task Force on Energy, Heavy

Industry and the Maine Coast, I recommend the enactment of legislation to establish a Coastal Zone from which oil refineries, oil ports and other heavy industry would be barred, with some limited exceptions to allow expansion of existing heavy industry.

Two coastal areas would be excluded from the zone, the Portland Harbor area and the area surrounding Machias Bay. Heavy industry in general would be allowed in the Machias zone. Oil port and refinery development would be allowed only in the Portland zone, where significant oil commerce presently exists. All development would continue to be subject to local zoning decisions and to State approval under the Maine Site Selection Law. Large oil port development in the Portland Harbor zone would be allowed only under the auspices of the Maine Port Authority, with public ownership of key pier, storage, and pipeline facilities.

The last Legislature created the Saco River Environmental Advisory Committee to prepare a comprehensive plan for the immediate and long-range protection and development of the resources of the Saco River Corridor. After two years of preparation by this Committee of citizens and municipal officers, the plan will be submitted to this Legislature. It deserves your serious consideration.

Public Lands

Because it is no longer realistic to assume that all Maine townships will eventually be organized, I recommend the public lots and the townships in which they exist be restructured to better accommodate the needs of our people. To accomplish this, it will be necessary to clarify what powers are retained by the State, not only under the nineteenth century deeds which conveyed timber and grass rights to many of these lots, but also under the articles of our separation from Massachusetts.

To terminate outstanding timber and grass conveyances, I recommend a fundamental restructuring of the State's relationship to the unorganized territories, creating one or more plantations to encompass all unorganized townships for limited self-government. As part of this reform, public lots and the income derived therefrom should be transferred to the State and not be left as a windfall to the incorporators of each new town.

To determine the State's power to convert these lands to public uses other than education, I also recommend the Legislature authorize, as a test case, development of recreational facilities or State forests on one or more reserved lots selected for their unique adaptability to such development. Should the Law Court find the State has a free hand with these public lots, the Bureau of Public Lands in the proposed Department of Conservation should be commissioned to inventory the various possible public uses of the remaining lots, including those townships where lots have not been specifically identified, for the purpose of developing a management plan. The proposed Bureau of Public Lands should be given the power to locate the unlocated public lots and to exchange, sell and combine public lots for a variety of public purposes.

The Bureau of Public Lands should also establish a registry that would clear titles to the various coastal islands and shelves which, if not privately claimed, would revert to State ownership. This would be a significant step in an on-going effort to preserve as much of our scenic coastline for public appreciation as is possible.

Energy

Public concern is growing over the energy crisis. Year after year, we worry about threats of shortages, and Maine families and businesses absorb massive fuel price increases. Lacking energy resources of its own, Maine has been especially dependent on the private energy industry, especially the major oil companies which supply our home heating oil, kerosene and heavy fuel oil used by our utilities and industries.

This recurring crisis simply indicates the private energy industry is unable to deliver reliable supplies at reasonable costs despite sympathetic Federal protection and tax breaks like the oil import restrictions and the oil depletion allowance.

So that Maine's people are no longer exposed to the profit priorities of the oil companies and their captive Federal agencies, State officials must have more accurate information about the industry. Accordingly, the Public Utilities Commission should be given authority to require major suppliers of petroleum fuels to file regular reports on their sales in Maine, the security of their future supplies, contingency plans for meeting shortages, and to comply with State allocation priorities in emergencies. This is a priority recommendation of the Task Force on Industrial Fuel Oil which reported in 1971.

Agriculture

To assure effective enforcement of our laws relating to the humane treatment of animals, whether pets or domestic animals owned for profit, I recommend authorization of a division of animal welfare in the Department of Agriculture. So that funding of this new agency would not be unduly burdensome on dog owners, this measure would be funded from general revenues and not dog tag receipts.

I also endorse, in principle, establishment of fair marketing practices for several agricultural industries or legislation to encourage small farmers to bargain collectively with dealers and processors.

IV. GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

The 105th Legislature made significant contributions to the improvement of State government operations by creating several departments which consolidated several smaller agencies with related functions. This effort should be continued through legislation to place the remaining unstructured agencies within the major departments. The Legislature should also consider a number of changes to improve the effectiveness of the legislative and judicial branches.

Executive Reorganization

To strengthen the cabinet structure approved by the 105th Legislature and to provide for more efficient and effective operation of State government, I propose legislation to implement the reorganization of four additional cabinet level departments representing vital functions of Maine State government.

More specifically, I again recommend the creation of the Department of Human Services and the Department of Business Regulation. These bills have been carefully studied by the agencies involved in close cooperation with the State Planning Office.

In order to provide the assistance and guidance necessary for the orderly development of Maine's coast, I endorse legislation to create the Department of Marine Resources. This agency will include the present Department of Sea and Shore Fisheries with expanded administrative duties, research and development activities and will provide overall responsibility for the coordination of the State's marine resources functions.

I also propose creation of a Department of Conservation. This department will serve as the major land management agency of the State, bringing together under one administrator a new Bureau of Public Lands as well as the current departments of Parks and Recreation, Forestry and the Maine Land Use Regulation Commission.

In addition to the four cabinet-level agencies recommended, I propose to reassign certain existing agencies. In this regard, I recommend the Maine Historic Preservation Commission be attached to the new Department of Educational and Cultural Services and the Division of Motor Vehicles of the Secretary of State's Office be attached to the new Department of Transportation. Finally, I propose to transfer the Pesticides Control Board and the responsibility for underground sewage disposal to the new cabinet-level Department of Environmental Protection.

Legislative Reform

While the report "Legislative Reform in Maine" deals with several important areas in developing a more efficient legislative process, it represents only a partial discussion of the problem. The report did not discuss such significant proposals as a unicameral Legislature, reduction of the size of the House, increased length of Senators' terms and reapportionment. Because such proposals promise to have a significant impact on the legislative process, they merit careful study and review.

Again this Session, I will support a constitutional amendment to abolish the Executive Council. The Council is a relic of the 19th Century and, despite the dedicated service of its members, its structure serves to divide executive responsibility and impede the proper administration of State government. I also recommend the Constitution be amended to provide for annual sessions of the Legislature, gubernatorial appointment and removal of constitutional officers, item veto, and reapportionment and reduction in size of the Maine House of Representatives.

Judicial Reform

Of the many issues the Legislature will face this session, few will be more complex or more fundamental to the interests of the people of our State than the enactment of a sound and workable system for compensating motor vehicle accident victims. I support the concept generally referred to as "no fault" motor vehicle insurance, and I encourage you to carefully review each of the several proposals you will receive to determine which best advances the interests of Maine's driving public.

To promote more efficient administration of Maine's criminal justice system, I suggest the present county prosecutor system be replaced by the creation of six prosecution districts with the chief prosecutor in each district elected to serve on a full-time basis for a four-year term. This will create district attorney offices of sufficient size to enable staff specialization with the resulting efficiencies.

Maine has long recognized its responsibility to provide counsel for indigent defendants who face charges of a serious criminal nature. However in the Spring of 1972, the Supreme Court expanded our responsibility in this field by declaring that indigent people are entitled to an attorney anytime they face the possibility of a jail sentence. To meet this added responsibility more efficiently, I propose the present system of private counsel paid by the courts be replaced by a full-time public defender system for persons unable to pay for their own defense.

In anticipation of reform which may later be mandated, I recommend that discretion be given to judges to impose maximum sentences with indeterminate minima so that an effective correctional program may be styled for each convicted individual. Approaching the matter in this fashion will enable the criminal bar, the judiciary, correctional personnel and the prisoners themselves to evaluate the effectiveness and advisability of such an innovative approach to rehabilitation of convicted criminals.

In a related proposal, I recommend that first-time marijuana possession convictions be treated specially under our criminal laws. So long as we regard this as a crime we should, of course, require that violators be prosecuted. Unfortunately, while we do this under the claim that it is for the user's own well-being, we at the same time, by labeling him a criminal, do perhaps more damage to his future than marijuana usage ever could. The measure I suggest will expunge from all records available to the public any indication of a first conviction.

Too often in recent years controversy has arisen regarding the right of the people to know what government is doing. To clarify certain ambiguities that currently exist in the right-to-know law, I propose a revision of existing laws along lines suggested by Federal legislation.

Also related to the public's right to know is the newsman's right to keep his sources of information confidential. I believe many of our other fundamental freedoms hinge upon the freedom of the press to report what it learns without having to disclose its sources.

General Operations of State Government

For members of the Maine State Retirement System, I recommend an improvement in their benefits by changing the present retirement

formula and by increasing the minimum retirement allowance to \$100 per month. This program is possible without a State appropriation because earnings on the Maine Retirement Fund have increased and State employees and teachers are willing to have another one and one-half percent deducted from their salaries.

I advocate legislation to adjust the statutory limitations governing salary provisions for State officers and officials including the constitutional officers and the judiciary. This measure is important to the recruitment and retention of able administrators and professional State officers. I also favor granting greater flexibility to the Personnel Board in allocating and reallocating positions as may be necessary for effective agency operations.

I also support a constitutional amendment exempting lease-purchase agreements for private construction of buildings to be used for State government purposes from the State credit loan and debt limit.

To provide an efficient procedure to dispose of claims against the State, I support legislation creating a State Claims Commission. The Commission would be authorized to approve immediate payment of claims not exceeding \$3,000. Larger claims shall be investigated by the Commission and a report forwarded to the Legislature with appropriate recommendations. This bill would make State officers and employees immune from personal liability for acts and omissions when such acts or omissions are not wanton or willful. In addition, the bill would protect any State officer or employee from financial loss and expense in connection with any action brought against any such officer or employee under the Federal Civil Rights Act. Finally, this bill would enable any State agency to purchase liability insurance indemnifying the State and its officers and employees. The sovereign immunity of the State in connection with claims covered by such liability insurance would be waived to the limit of such coverage.

Finally, I am proposing amendments to the Regional Development enabling legislation. These amendments involve changes in the district membership not clearly defined when the law was passed. They also include regional planning review of State as well as local and Federal plans and programs.

V. CONCLUSION

The legislative program I have outlined is a compilation of what I believe to be proposals of high priority for the Regular Session of the 106th Legislature.

Each of these proposals will come before you in detail in individual pieces of legislation. In total, they represent progress at a moderate pace and goals easily within our reach. Their impact, however, would be extensive in terms of rectifying wrongs, expanding and improving services to the public and enhancing our goal of shaping social conditions, to the extent that it is within our power, to guarantee a good Maine life for all the people of the State.