

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Create a Saco River Preservation Fund

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

Sec. 1. 12 MRSA §9322, sub-§4, as amended by PL 1983, c. 556, §14, is further amended to read:

4. Saco River Corridor. For the purpose of issuing permits under this section, the lands within Oxford County within the Saco River Corridor, so designated by Private and Special Law 1973, chapter 150, as amended, shall be subject to the same requirements and procedures as lands within the unorganized territory, except that a permit fee and disposition of fees charged must be in accordance with section 9327.

Sec. 2. 12 MRSA §9327 is enacted to read:

§ 9327. Permits for campfires within the Saco River Corridor; fund established

This section applies to permits issued by the Director of the Bureau of Forestry, referred to in this section as "the director," or an agent authorized by the director for campfires within the Saco River Corridor as established in Title 38, section 953 and referred to in this section as "the corridor."

1. Permit fee. A person applying for a campfire permit within the corridor must pay a fee of \$10 for each permit issued. The director may authorize agents to issue permits and collect the fee required under this section. An authorized agent shall submit all fees collected to the director on a monthly basis and in a manner prescribed by the director. The director shall deposit all fees collected under this subsection in the Saco River Preservation Fund established under subsection 2.

2. Saco River Preservation Fund. The director shall create a dedicated nonlapsing fund known as the Saco River Preservation Fund, referred to in this section as "the fund." The fund is established for the purpose of reimbursing municipalities for costs incurred in providing law enforcement, sanitation and emergency services to recreational users of the corridor.

3. Disbursal from fund. The director shall adopt rules establishing a process for the equitable disbursal of funds annually to municipalities seeking reimbursement for expenditures directly associated with the provision of law enforcement, sanitation and emergency services within the corridor. The costs of equipment procured specifically for providing these services to recreational users of the corridor are also eligible for reimbursement from the fund.

The Saco River Corridor Commission established by Title 5, section 12004-G, subsection 13 may seek and is entitled to reimbursement from the fund in the same manner as a municipality. The fund may not be used to reimburse the commission for any other expenditure or administrative or operating cost. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes a fee for a permit issued to allow a fire within the Saco River Corridor. It establishes the Saco River Preservation Fund and requires the Director of the Bureau of Forestry within the Department of Conservation to adopt rules to establish a process for reimbursing municipalities from the fund. Costs incurred in providing law enforcement, sanitation and emergency services within the Saco River Corridor are eligible for reimbursement from the fund along with costs to purchase equipment specifically to provide those services.