

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FIVE

H.P. 1222 - L.D. 1827

**An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Right to Know Advisory
Committee Concerning Public Records Requests**

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

Sec. 1. 1 MRSA §408-A, sub-§4, as repealed and replaced by PL 2015, c. 494, Pt. A, §1, is amended to read:

4. Refusals; denials. If a body or an agency or official having custody or control of any public record refuses permission to inspect or copy or abstract a public record, the body or agency or official shall provide, within 5 working days of the receipt of the request for inspection or copying, written notice of the denial, stating the reason for the denial or the expectation that the request will be denied in full or in part following a review. A request or series of requests for inspection or copying may be denied, in whole or in part, on the basis that the request or series of requests is unduly burdensome or oppressive if the procedures established in subsection 4-A are followed. Failure to comply with this subsection is considered failure to allow inspection or copying and is subject to appeal as provided in section 409.

Sec. 2. 1 MRSA §408-A, sub-§4-A, as amended by PL 2017, c. 288, Pt. A, §1, is further amended to read:

4-A. Action for protection. A body, an agency or an official may seek protection from a request or series of requests for inspection or copying that is unduly burdensome or oppressive by filing an action for an order of protection in the Superior Court for the county where the request or series of requests for records was made within ~~30~~ 60 days of receipt of the request or the date on which the body, agency or official notifies the requester that the series of requests is unduly burdensome or oppressive.

A. The following information must be included in the complaint if available or provided to the parties and filed with the court no more than 14 days from the filing of the complaint or such other period as the court may order:

(1) The terms of the request or series of requests and any modifications agreed to by the requesting party;

(2) A statement of the facts that demonstrate the burdensome or oppressive nature of the request or series of requests, with a good faith estimate of the time required to search for, retrieve, redact if necessary and compile the records responsive to the request or series of requests and the resulting costs calculated in accordance with subsection 8;

(3) A description of the efforts made by the body, agency or official to inform the requesting party of the good faith estimate of costs and to discuss possible modifications of the request or series of requests that would reduce the burden of production; and

(4) Proof that the body, agency or official has submitted a notice of intent to file an action under this subsection to the party requesting the records, dated at least 10 days prior to filing the complaint for an order of protection under this subsection.

B. Any appeal that may be filed by the requesting party under section 409 may be consolidated with an action under this subsection.

C. An action for protection may be advanced on the docket and receive priority over other cases when the court determines that the interests of justice so require upon the request of any party.

D. If the court finds that the body, agency or official has demonstrated good cause to limit or deny the request or series of requests, the court shall enter an order making such findings and establishing the terms upon which production, if any, must be made. If the court finds that the body, agency or official has not demonstrated good cause to limit or deny the request or series of requests, the court shall establish a date by which the records must be provided to the requesting party.