

SENATE

JAMES F. DILL, DISTRICT 5, CHAIR
CHLOE S. MAXMIN, DISTRICT 13
RUSSELL BLACK, DISTRICT 17

KAREN S. NADEAU, LEGISLATIVE ANALYST
CHERYL MCGOWAN, COMMITTEE CLERK



HOUSE

MARGARET M. O'NEIL, SACO, CHAIR
DAVID HAROLD MCCREA, FORT FAIRFIELD
SCOTT LANDRY, FARMINGTON
LAURIE OSHER, ORONO
RANDALL C. HALL, WILTON
THOMAS H. SKOLFIELD, WELD
SUSAN BERNARD, CARIBOU
JEFFREY ALLEN GIFFORD, LINCOLN
JOSEPH F. UNDERWOOD, PRESQUE ISLE
WILLIAM D. PLUECKER, WARREN

STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTIETH LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

TO: Senator Catherine E. Breen, Senate Chair,
Representative Teresa S. Pierce, House Chair, and
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations & Financial Affairs

FROM: Senator Jim Dill, Senate Chair, *JD KSN*
Representative Margaret M. O'Neil, House Chair, and *MMO KSN*
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

DATE: March 23, 2021
SUBJ: Biennial Budget Report Back

The Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (ACF) Committee is pleased to submit the following report for the proposed 2022-2023 biennial budget initiatives related to Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. We voted unanimously in favor of all initiatives and language parts with the following proposed changes to the biennial budget. **Please see attached three-page document prepared by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (ACF) summarizing the changes to the biennial budget as proposed by the ACF Committee.**

1. Maine Meat and Poultry Inspection Program:

The ACF Committee voted unanimously to amend three initiatives relating to the Maine Meat and Poultry Inspection (MMPI) Program.

- Ref. #213 and 214 on Pages 3 and 4 establish one limited-period Consumer Protection Inspector position funded 50% General Fund (GF) and 50% Federal Expenditures Fund (FEF) in the Bureau of Agriculture program (0393). This position will provide inspection services to meeting increasing demand in the MMPI Program and reduce wait times for livestock producers. **The ACF Committee voted unanimously in favor of establishing this as an ongoing position rather than a limited-period position as proposed in the budget;** the ACF Committee recommends adding this position to the baseline budget (adding one legislative count position).
- Ref. #216 and 217 on Pages 4 and 5 under the Bureau of Agriculture (0393) and Ref. #231 and 232 on Page 37 under the Office of the Commissioner (0401) are companion initiatives. These two initiatives establish one limited-period Inspection Process Analyst Coordinator Position for the MMPI Program funded 50% GF and 50% FEF within the same program and provides funding for related All Other costs; and provides All Other

(over)

funds in the Office of the Commissioner program, GF and Other Special Revenue Funds for administrative costs related to the position. This position will administer day-to-day operations in the MMPI Program, which has experienced increasing demand with the new Cooperative Interstate Shipment program. **The ACF Committee voted unanimously in favor of establishing this as an ongoing position rather than limited-period position as proposed in the budget;** the ACF Committee recommends adding this position to the baseline budget (adding one legislative count position).

2. PFAS testing and assistance:

In addition, the ACF Committee voted unanimously to amend one initiative and to add a new initiative – both relating to perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substance (PFAS) testing and assistance for farmers.

- Ref. #215 on Page 4 provides funding to continue PFAS testing in foods for which state action levels have been established. The Governor’s PFAS Task Force recommended additional robust testing of agricultural products. In order for the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to continue to monitor the health of Maine’s milk supply and investigate beef (the two products with established state action thresholds), it needs sustained and adequate funding to conduct sampling, perform laboratory analysis and to obtain necessary specialized supplies for PFAS.

The committee recognized that the budgeted \$13,000 for each fiscal year was not nearly enough to begin to address this emerging crisis. **As a result, the ACF Committee voted unanimously to increase funding for PFAS testing by \$50,000 in each fiscal year for a total of \$63,000 in each fiscal year.**

- Additionally, **the ACF Committee voted unanimously in favor of adding one ongoing legislative count position in the baseline budget within the Bureau of Agriculture to coordinate PFAS education and outreach to farmers and to support increased testing of agricultural products.** The initiative would provide the following funding from the GF:
 - In fiscal year 2021-22: \$97,496 for personal services and \$3,902 for All Other for a total of \$101,398.
 - In fiscal year 2022-23: \$102,363 for personal services and \$3,902 for All Other for a total of \$106,265.

3. Bureau of Parks and Lands – seasonal into year-round positions

Finally, **the ACF Committee voted unanimously to combine six seasonal positions into three year-round positions under the Bureau of Parks and Lands, Parks – General Operations (Z221).**

We recommend combining four seasonal Park Manager II positions into two year-round Park Manager II positions – establishing two new legislative count positions in the baseline budget. We recommend combining two seasonal Park Ranger positions into one year-round Park Ranger position – establishing one new legislative count position in the baseline budget. The cost of these initiatives is \$7,093 in fiscal year 2021-22 and \$8,388 in fiscal year 2022-23.

- c: Members, Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry