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## **An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Relating to Review of the Department of Conservation**

**Emergency preamble.** Whereas, acts of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

**Whereas,** statutes authorizing the Department of Conservation, Bureau of Forestry to study outcome-based forest policy as an alternative to prescriptive regulation will be repealed on July 1, 2006 unless action is taken by the Legislature; and

**Whereas,** an extension of this repeal date is necessary for further study by the bureau of this potentially beneficial policy; and

**Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore,

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

**Sec. 1. 3 MRSA §959, sub-§1, ¶A,** as amended by PL 2003, c. 578, §1 and c. 600, §1, is further amended to read:

A. The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over agriculture, conservation and forestry matters shall use the following list as a guideline for scheduling reviews:

- (1) Baxter State Park Authority in 2009;
- (2) Department of Conservation in ~~2005~~2011;
- (3) Blueberry Advisory Committee in ~~2005~~2011;
- (4) Board of Pesticides Control in ~~2005~~2011;
- (5) Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine in ~~2005~~2011;
- (6) Seed Potato Board in ~~2005~~2011;
- (7) Maine Dairy and Nutrition Council in 2007;
- (8) Maine Dairy Promotions Board in 2007;

(9) Maine Milk Commission in 2007;

(10) State Harness Racing Commission in 2007;

(11) Maine Agricultural Bargaining Board in ~~2003~~2009;

(12) Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources in 2009; and

(14) Land for Maine's Future Board in 2007.

**Sec. 2. 12 MRSA §8003, sub-§3, ¶Q**, as enacted by PL 2001, c. 339, §1, is amended to read:

Q. The director, in cooperation with public and private landowners, shall actively pursue creating experimental areas on public and private land where the principles and applicability of outcome-based forest policy, as defined in section 8868, can be applied and tested. No more than 6 such areas may be designated, a single area may not exceed 100,000 acres and the total area under agreement may not exceed 200,000 acres. One area must be owned by a landowner holding fewer than 1,000 acres statewide. The director shall seek to designate areas representing differing forest types and conditions and from different geographic regions of the State. The term of initial agreements may not exceed 5 years. This paragraph is repealed July 1, ~~2006~~2007.

**Sec. 3. 12 MRSA §8868, sub-§2-B**, as enacted by PL 2001, c. 339, §2, is amended to read:

**2-B. Outcome-based forest policy.** "Outcome-based forest policy" means a science-based, voluntary process to achieve agreed-upon economic, environmental and social outcomes in the State's forest, as an alternative to prescriptive regulation, demonstrating measurable progress towards achieving statewide sustainability goals and allowing landowners to use creativity and flexibility to achieve objectives, while providing for the conservation of public trust resources and the public values of forests. This subsection is repealed July 1, ~~2006~~2007.

**Sec. 4. 12 MRSA §8869, sub-§3-A**, as enacted by PL 2001, c. 339, §3, is amended to read:

**3-A. Plans for experimental areas.** Practices applied on an experimental area created pursuant to section 8003, subsection 3, paragraph Q must provide at least the equivalent forest and environmental protection as provided by existing rules and any applicable local regulations. At a minimum, tests of outcome-based principles must address:

- A. Soil productivity;
- B. Water quality, wetlands and riparian zones;
- C. Timber supply and quality;
- D. Aesthetic impacts of timber harvesting;
- E. Biological diversity; and
- F. Public accountability.

The Governor shall appoint a panel of technical experts to work with the director to implement, monitor and assess tests of outcome-based forestry principles. In order to participate in the outcome-based forestry experiment, the landowner, director and technical panel must develop agreed-upon desired outcomes for the experimental area and develop a method for determining if the outcomes have been attained and a system for reporting results to the public. This subsection is repealed July 1, ~~2006~~2007.

**Sec. 5. 12 MRSA §8869, sub-§7-A,** as enacted by PL 2001, c. 339, §5, is amended to read:

**7-A. Exemption for outcome-based forest policy experimental areas.**

Outcome-based forest policy experimental areas designated under section 8003, subsection 3, paragraph Q are exempt from the requirements of this subchapter and rules adopted pursuant to this subchapter. This subsection is repealed July 1, ~~2006~~2007.

**Sec. 6. 12 MRSA §8869, sub-§13,** as enacted by PL 2001, c. 339, §6, is amended to read:

**13. Confidential information.** Information provided to the bureau voluntarily or to fulfill reporting requirements for the purposes of establishing and monitoring outcome-based forest policy experimental areas, as created pursuant to section 8003, subsection 3, paragraph Q, is designated as confidential for the purposes of Title 1, section 402, subsection 3, paragraph A if the bureau has determined that failure to designate the information as confidential would provide competitors an opportunity to obtain business or competitive advantage over the person to whom the information belongs or pertains or would result in loss or other significant detriment to that person. The bureau, working with the landowner and the panel of technical experts appointed under subsection 3-A, may publish reports as long as those reports do not reveal confidential information. This subsection is repealed July 1, ~~2006~~2007.

**Sec. 7. Report to Legislature on outcome-based forestry.** By January 2, 2007, the Director of the Bureau of Forestry within the Department of Conservation shall report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over forestry matters on the interest in and feasibility of establishing outcome-based experimental areas in accordance with Public Law 2001, chapter 339. The report must include a recommendation regarding continuing authorization for the bureau to pursue outcome-based forest policy. The committee may report out legislation to the 123rd Legislature regarding outcome-based forestry.

**Sec. 8. Review of submerged lands leasing program.** The Director of the Bureau of Parks and Lands within the Department of Conservation shall review the rent structure for leases under the submerged lands leasing program administered by the bureau in accordance with the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 12, section 1862. The review must include an examination of fair market rental values, maximum rents established in statute and the potential to generate more revenue from submerged land leases. The director shall submit a report with findings and recommendations to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over public lands by January 2, 2007. The report must include options for increasing lease revenue significantly and a description of potential risks or problems associated with each option. The department shall submit legislation necessary to implement the bureau's recommendations to the First Regular Session of the 123rd Legislature.

**Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this Act takes effect when approved.

## **SUMMARY**

This bill is the committee report of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 3, section 955, subsection 4. It amends the statutes authorizing the Department of Conservation, Bureau of Forestry to study the feasibility of implementing an outcome-based forestry policy as defined in Title 12, section 8868, subsection 2-B by changing the statutory repeal date for these provisions from July 1, 2006 to July 1, 2007. It requires the Director of the Bureau of Forestry to report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over forestry matters by January 2, 2007 with a recommendation regarding continuing authorization for outcome-based forestry. It authorizes the committee to report out legislation to the 123rd Legislature.

This bill requires the Director of the Bureau of Parks and Lands within the Department of Conservation to review the bureau's rent structure for leasing submerged lands and to report back to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over public lands by January 2, 2007. This bill also establishes the next review date for agencies reviewed by the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry under the State Government Evaluation Act.