

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

Resolve, To Evaluate Climate Change Adaptation Options for the State

Sec. 1 Creation of stakeholder group; membership. Resolved: That the Department of Environmental Protection, referred to in this resolve as "the department," shall establish and convene a stakeholder group to evaluate the options and actions available to Maine people and businesses to prepare for and adapt to the most likely impacts of climate change. Convening this group to respond to climate change must not reduce continued strong state efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The department shall include in its stakeholder group and the evaluation process performed under section 2:

1. Representatives of business, industry and trade associations;
2. Representatives of nongovernmental organizations; and
3. State agencies with a current interest in these concerns and likely involvement in the implementation of recommendations.

The department must ensure that a balance of interests is represented in decision making. The department may ask the University of Maine and other higher education institutions to provide scientific and technical expertise to the stakeholder group; and be it further

Sec. 2 Evaluation. Resolved: That the department shall build upon the 2009 climate impact assessment by the University of Maine in evaluating the options available to Maine people and businesses for adapting to the likely environmental effects of climate change. That assessment concluded that climate change is already occurring in this State as a result of increased levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and that, even with the greenhouse gas reduction goals set forth in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 38, section 576, more thorough planning is necessary to identify and implement the State's responses to climate change in the areas of:

1. Ensuring sustainable opportunities for the development of greenhouse gas offset projects and low-greenhouse gas emission technologies and processes in the various sectors of Maine's economy;
2. Built infrastructure, including coastal and inland flooding effects on roads and facilities, heat effects in urban centers and beach scouring;
3. Habitat and fish and wildlife species, including the effects of invasive species, a lack of adequate conservation areas, a lack of connectivity between habitat and wildlife and inadequate wetlands protection;
4. Marine ecosystems;
5. Forests and forest management practices, including a higher incidence of pests and fires and a lack of biomass availability;
6. Agricultural and farming practices;
7. Human health, including increases in heat-related and vector-borne diseases;
8. Water supplies and drinking water; and

9. Emergency response systems and planning; and be it further

Sec. 3 Report. Resolved: That by February 27, 2010 the department shall report recommendations related to the evaluation under this resolve, along with any necessary implementing legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources. The recommendations must be organized by the affected natural resource and economic sectors and may include proposals for legislation, modifications to existing rules and specific initiatives for one or more agencies to undertake in collaboration with stakeholder organizations to implement the recommendations. The Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources is authorized to submit legislation related to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 124th Legislature; and be it further

Sec. 4 Funding of report. Resolved: That the department is authorized to accept public and private funds for the costs incurred to prepare the report under section 3. All funds received for these purposes must be deposited into the Maine Environmental Protection Fund established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 38, section 351 and must be used exclusively for purposes related to the preparation of this report.

SUMMARY

This resolve directs the Department of Environmental Protection to create a stakeholder group to evaluate the options available to Maine people and businesses for adapting to the most likely impacts of climate change and to focus on the climate impact assessment by the University of Maine that concluded that climate change is already occurring in the State as a result of increased levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. The department is to report recommendations, along with proposed legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources by February 27, 2010.