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An Act To Make Fisheries and Wildlife Projects Eligible for Tax Increment Financing

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

Sec. 1. 30-A MRSA §5222, sub-§10-A is enacted to read:

10-A. Fisheries and wildlife project. "Fisheries and wildlife project" means a project approved by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife undertaken for the purpose of improving public access to fisheries and wildlife resources of the State for fishing, hunting, research or observation or for conservation or improvement of the fisheries and wildlife resources of the State.

Sec. 2. 30-A MRSA §5223, sub-§3, ¶A, as amended by PL 2007, c. 413, §3, is further amended to read:

A. At least 25%, by area, of the real property within a development district must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- (1) Must be a blighted area;
- (2) Must be in need of rehabilitation, redevelopment or conservation work including fisheries and wildlife projects; or
- (3) Must be suitable for commercial or arts district uses.

Sec. 3. 30-A MRSA §5225, sub-§1, ¶C, as amended by PL 2011, c. 101, §14 and c. 102, §1, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

C. Costs related to economic development, environmental improvements, fisheries and wildlife projects, recreational trails or employment training within the municipality or plantation, including, but not limited to:

- (1) Costs of funding economic development programs or events developed by the municipality or plantation or funding the marketing of the municipality or plantation as a business or arts location;
- (2) Costs of funding environmental improvement projects developed by the municipality or plantation for commercial or arts district use or related to such activities;

(3) Funding to establish permanent economic development revolving loan funds or investment funds;

(4) Costs of services to provide skills development and training for residents of the municipality or plantation. These costs may not exceed 20% of the total project costs and must be designated as training funds in the development program;

(5) Quality child care costs, including finance costs and construction, staffing, training, certification and accreditation costs related to child care;

(6) Costs associated with new or existing recreational trails determined by the department to have significant potential to promote economic development, including, but not limited to, costs for multiple projects and project phases that may include planning, design, construction, maintenance, grooming and improvements with respect to new or existing recreational trails, which may include bridges that are part of the trail corridor, used all or in part for all-terrain vehicles, snowmobiles, hiking, bicycling, cross-country skiing or other related multiple uses;

(7) Costs associated with a new or expanded transit service, limited to:

(a) Transit service capital costs, including but not limited to: transit vehicles such as buses, ferries, vans, rail conveyances and related equipment; bus shelters and other transit-related structures; and benches, signs and other transit-related infrastructure; and

(b) In the case of transit-oriented development districts, ongoing costs of adding to an existing transit system or creating a new transit service and limited strictly to transit operator salaries, transit vehicle fuel and transit vehicle parts replacements; and

(8) Costs associated with the development of fisheries and wildlife projects; and

Sec. 4. Fisheries and wildlife projects; rules. The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, in consultation with the Department of Economic and Community Development, shall adopt rules establishing standards and a process for approval of fisheries and wildlife projects eligible for tax increment financing under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 30-A, chapter 206.

SUMMARY

This bill authorizes the use of tax increment financing for fisheries and wildlife projects approved by the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Projects must be undertaken for the purpose of improving public access to fisheries and wildlife resources of the State for fishing, hunting, research or observation or for conservation or improvement of the fisheries and wildlife resources of the State.