

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

Amend the bill by striking out the title and substituting the following:

**'An Act To Establish the Wood Energy Program'**

Amend the bill by striking out everything after the title and before the summary and inserting the following:

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

**Whereas,** the Legislature intended, with the enactment of Public Law 2015, chapter 483, to ensure that a biomass facility that was closed down would not qualify to participate in a competitive solicitation for biomass resources because it would fail to meet the requirement that a biomass facility was operational at least at a 50% capacity for 60 days prior to the initiation of a competitive solicitation and continued to operate at that capacity except for planned or forced outages; and

**Whereas,** a review of a contract for biomass resources to determine if contract requirements were met was just concluded at the Public Utilities Commission; and

**Whereas,** the contract for biomass resources that was under review is with a biomass facility that received a contract in spite of the Legislature's intent to limit qualified applicants to those entities that were actively operating a biomass facility at the time a competitive solicitation was initiated; and

**Whereas,** the Legislature wants to ensure that those funds provided in Public Law 2015, chapter 483 that are not going to be paid to the biomass facility because not all contract requirements were met are used to support the forest products industry, especially since those requirements not met were those that would have directly benefited the forest products industry, and to do so this legislation must take effect immediately; 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. 35-A MRSA §10124** is enacted to read:

**§ 10124. Wood Energy Program**

**1. Establishment; purpose.** The Wood Energy Program is established within the trust to provide incentives and low-interest or no-interest loans in consultation with the Finance Authority of Maine, established in Title 10, chapter 110, in order to strengthen the State's forest products sector and lower energy costs by increasing the efficient use of wood for energy production.

**2. Wood energy fund.** There is established in the custody of the trust a special nonlapsing fund, to be known as the wood energy fund. The wood energy fund consists of the following:

- A. Such sums that may be transferred from the Public Utilities Commission from the cost recovery fund established in Public Law 2015, chapter 483, section 1, subsection 5;
- B. Other funds that the trust may receive from the State or from the Federal Government, or other agreements whose purpose is consistent with this section;
- C. Principal and interest received from the repayment of loans made from the wood energy fund; and
- D. Interest earned from the investment of fund balances.

**3. Program details.** The trust through the Wood Energy Program shall provide incentives and low-interest or no-interest loans to businesses, municipalities, educational institutions and nonprofit entities in the State for the installation of new wood-derived thermal energy or cogeneration projects from the wood energy fund established in subsection 2. The trust shall require Wood Energy Program participants to substantially share in the cost of projects funded under this section. The trust shall seek to maximize the Wood Energy Program's impact per dollar of expenditure from the wood energy fund and shall set limits it determines prudent on the size of incentives. The trust may not provide incentives or loans from the wood energy fund for the refurbishment or maintenance of existing facilities.

The trust shall develop activities promoting the Wood Energy Program in consultation with the Finance Authority of Maine. The trust shall consult with the Finance Authority of Maine, when appropriate, in its decisions to award incentives and loans. To the extent that funding is available, the trust shall offer technical assistance to eligible projects in a manner that is coordinated and consistent with other trust programs.

For purposes of this subsection, "new wood-derived thermal energy or cogeneration project" includes, but is not limited to, wood-fueled combined heat and power cogeneration boiler installations; co-location development that increases the efficient use of wood for energy production; conversion of fossil fuel fired boilers to wood-fueled boilers or boilers using biofuels derived from wood; and the installation of new wood-fueled boilers or boilers using biofuels derived from wood.

**Sec. 2. Contract evaluation; fund transfer.** If, in its annual evaluation of a 2-year contract entered into pursuant to Public Law 2015, chapter 483, the Public Utilities Commission finds that an entity that was awarded a contract for biomass resources is not meeting contract requirements and therefore is not qualified to receive the full contract payment or any contract payment, those funds that would have been paid to the entity had contract requirements been met must be transferred to the wood energy fund established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35-A, section 10124, subsection 2. Notwithstanding Public Law 2015, chapter 483, section 1, subsection 5, any funds remaining in the cost recovery fund established in Public Law 2015, chapter 483, section 1, subsection 5 that are not needed to pay above-market costs for biomass resources must be transferred to the wood energy fund.

**Sec. 3. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and allocations are made.

**EFFICIENCY MAINE TRUST**

**Wood Energy Fund N287**

Initiative: Allocates funds transferred from the Public Utilities Commission to establish the wood energy fund, to provide incentives and low-interest loans for new wood-derived thermal energy or cogeneration projects.

<b>OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>
All Other	\$266,027	\$500,000
<b>OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL</b>	<b>\$266,027</b>	<b>\$500,000</b>

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

**SUMMARY**

This amendment is the majority report and it replaces the bill. It specifies that, if the Public Utilities Commission finds that an entity awarded a contract for biomass resources pursuant to Public Law 2015, chapter 483 is not meeting contract requirements and therefore is not qualified to receive the full contract payment or any contract payment, those funds that would have been paid had contract requirements been met must be transferred to the wood energy fund. It also specifies that any funds remaining in the cost recovery fund established in Public Law 2015, chapter 483, section 1, subsection 5 that are not needed to pay above-market costs for biomass resources must also be transferred by the Public Utilities Commission to the wood energy fund. It establishes the wood energy fund and creates the Wood Energy Program within the Efficiency Maine Trust. It requires the trust to use funds, if there are any, to provide incentives and low-interest or no-interest loans for new wood-derived thermal energy or cogeneration projects. It requires that the trust consult with the Finance Authority of Maine, when appropriate, in the development of any Wood Energy Program incentives and the distribution of money from the wood energy fund. It prohibits the use of funds for incentives or loans for the refurbishment or maintenance of existing facilities.

The amendment also adds an appropriations and allocations section.

**FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED**  
(See attached)