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## **Resolve, To Establish a Task Force To Examine Agricultural Issues**

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

**Whereas,** this resolve establishes the Task Force To Examine Agricultural Issues to study barriers to economic prosperity in rural parts of the State and examine how innovation, infrastructure and technology may play a role in long-term, sustainable rural success; and

**Whereas,** the study must be initiated before the 90-day period expires in order that the study may be completed and a report submitted in time for submission to the next legislative session; 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

**Sec. 1 Task force established. Resolved:** That the Task Force To Examine Agricultural Issues, referred to in this resolve as "the task force," is established; and be it further

**Sec. 2 Task force membership. Resolved:** That the task force consists of 13 members appointed as follows:

1. Four members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate, including members from each of the 2 parties holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature, a member of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry and a member of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government;

2. Four members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House, including members from each of the 2 parties holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature, a member of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry and a member of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government;

3. The Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry or the commissioner's designee;

4. The Director of the Bureau of General Services or the director's designee;

5. Two public members representing blueberry harvesters appointed by the Speaker of the House. The Speaker of the House shall consider any recommendations submitted within 20 days of the effective date of this resolve by the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine regarding persons who have such expertise; and

6. One public member representing forest products landowners appointed by the President of the Senate. The President of the Senate shall consider any recommendations submitted within 20 days of the effective date of this resolve by the Maine Forest Products Council regarding persons who have such expertise; and be it further

**Sec. 3 Chairs. Resolved:** That the first-named Senate member is the Senate chair and the first-named House of Representatives member is the House chair of the task force; and be it further

**Sec. 4 Appointments; convening of task force. Resolved:** That all appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative Council once all appointments have been completed. After appointment of all members, the chairs shall call and convene the first meeting of the task force. If 30 days or more after the effective date of this resolve a majority of but not all appointments have been made, the chairs may request authority and the Legislative Council may grant authority for the task force to meet and conduct its business; and be it further

**Sec. 5 Duties. Resolved:** That the task force shall examine agricultural issues that create barriers to economic prosperity in rural parts of the State, including investment and development challenges, workforce training, labor shortages and marketing and branding opportunities, such as the "Made in Maine" initiative. The task force shall also examine how innovation, infrastructure and technology may play a role in long-term, sustainable rural success. The task force shall also examine the potential impact of requiring state facilities to use a certain percentage of biofuel and the effect the consolidation of the former Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources and the former Department of Conservation has had on agricultural issues in the State; and be it further

**Sec. 6 Staff assistance. Resolved:** That the Legislative Council shall provide necessary staffing services to the task force; and be it further

**Sec. 7 Report. Resolved:** That, no later than November 7, 2018, the task force shall submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, for presentation to the First Regular Session of the 129th Legislature.

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

## SUMMARY

This resolve establishes the Task Force To Examine Agricultural Issues to examine the barriers to economic prosperity in rural parts of the State and examine how innovation, infrastructure and technology may play a role in long-term, sustainable rural success.