

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

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

**'Resolve, To Direct the Commissioner of Agriculture,
Conservation and Forestry To Establish a Departmental
Task Force To Examine Agricultural Issues'**

Amend the resolve by striking out everything after the emergency preamble and before the emergency clause and inserting the following:

'Sec. 1 Commissioner to establish a departmental task force. Resolved: That the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, referred to in this resolve as "the commissioner," shall convene a departmental task force to study agricultural issues in the State. The commissioner shall invite representatives from each of the following to participate in the departmental task force:

1. Two members representing value-added manufacturers, recommended by the Maine Potato Board and the Wild Blueberry Commission of Maine;
2. A farmer representing the wild blueberry industry;
3. A farmer representing the dairy industry;
4. A farmer representing the potato industry;
5. A farmer representing the aquaculture industry;
6. A farmer representing the interests of the small fruit or vegetable growers;
7. A farmer appointed by the Agricultural Council of Maine;
8. A farmer appointed by the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association;
9. A contractor or owner representing the Professional Logging Contractors of Maine;
10. A member of Maine Woodland Owners;
11. A member of the Maine Farm Bureau;
12. A member representing a national food retailer;
13. A member with expertise in international trade policy; and
14. An economist from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service or, if unavailable, an economist from the University of Maine System; and be it further

Sec. 2 Chair; convening of initial meeting. Resolved: That the commissioner shall designate the economist from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Service or the economist from the University of Maine System to serve as chair of the departmental task force. If no economist

from the University of Maine System is available, the commissioner shall designate another member of the departmental task force to serve as chair. The commissioner shall convene the initial meeting of the departmental task force no later than 30 days following the effective date of this resolve; and be it further

Sec. 3 Duties. Resolved: That the departmental task force shall examine with reference to agricultural issues:

1. 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;

2. How innovation, infrastructure and technology may play a role in long-term, sustainable agricultural and rural success;

3. The potential impact of requiring state facilities to use a certain percentage of agriculturally derived biofuel;

4. The effect of international trade policy on state agricultural commodities; and

5. The recommendations of the report of the 2003 Blaine House Conference on Maine's Natural Resource-based Industry: Charting a New Course; and be it further

Sec. 4 Meetings. Resolved: That the chair, in consultation with the commissioner, shall schedule meetings of the departmental task force as necessary to complete the departmental task force's assigned duties. The commissioner shall notify members of the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over agriculture, conservation and forestry matters and other Legislators with a known interest in agricultural issues of all meetings of the departmental task force; and be it further

Sec. 5 Staffing and funding. Resolved: That the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall provide staff support to the departmental task force from existing resources. The commissioner may use contributions of money, services and supplies accepted under existing authority to support the work of the departmental task force; and be it further

Sec. 6 Agency cooperation. Resolved: That the commissioner, the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development and the Chief Executive Officer of the Finance Authority of Maine shall each designate a representative from their respective agencies to serve as a resource to the departmental task force, respond to information requests and attend departmental task force meetings upon request; and be it further

Sec. 7 Report. Resolved: That, no later than January 15, 2019, the departmental task force shall submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation to implement the recommendations, for presentation to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over agriculture, conservation and forestry matters; and be it further

Sec. 8 Authority to submit legislation. Resolved: That the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over agriculture, conservation and forestry matters may submit a bill pertaining to the report submitted pursuant to section 7 to the First Regular Session of the 129th Legislature.'

SUMMARY

This amendment, which is the majority report of the committee, directs the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to convene a departmental task force to study agricultural issues in the State, including the recommendations presented in the 2003 Blaine House Conference on Maine's Natural Resource-based Industry: Charting a New Course report.

FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED

(See attached)