



128th MAINE LEGISLATURE

LD 8

LR 372(02)

An Act To Protect Maine's Forest Rangers

Fiscal Note for Bill as Amended by Committee Amendment " "
Committee: Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Fiscal Note Required: Yes

Fiscal Note

	FY 2017-18	FY 2018-19	Projections FY 2019-20	Projections FY 2020-21
Net Cost (Savings)				
General Fund	\$136,531	\$5,951	\$5,951	\$5,951
Appropriations/Allocations				
General Fund	\$136,531	\$5,951	\$5,951	\$5,951

Fiscal Detail and Notes

This bill would modify certification standards of, and create a training program for, forest rangers within the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (ACF) to allow them to carry firearms in the line of duty. It directs the Maine Criminal Justice Academy (MCJA) to develop a forest ranger specific law enforcement training program in conjunction with the ACF.

This bill includes appropriations of \$87,899 to purchase firearms, ammunition, holsters and lockboxes to arm forest rangers, \$13,330 for firearms training and \$35,302 for overtime staffing in fiscal year 2017-18. Also, starting in fiscal year 2018-19 all forest rangers will complete annual firearms certification requiring an appropriation of \$5,951. The department has indicated that 50 Rangers currently classified as Forest Ranger II positions will need to be reclassified with a salary equivalent to a Game Warden or Marine Patrol Officer. If such a reclassification occurs the cost is estimated to be \$9,880 per position for a total of \$494,000. This cost is not included in this fiscal note.

Current statute provides that Forest Rangers have law enforcement authority but they are exempt from having to complete the Basic Law Enforcement Training Program (BLETP) required of other law enforcement officers because they do not carry a firearm. With the issuance of firearms the ACF has indicated that it will require forest rangers who have not already completed the BLETP to complete a newly developed forest ranger specific basic law enforcement training program within 5 years. Because this program has yet to be developed, no appropriation for this cost is made at this time. Currently there are 59 positions that would need to complete the newly created training program. The department projects that they will begin to cycle through training at a rate of 5 positions per year starting in fiscal year 2018-19. Using the current BLETP as an estimate, this training would have an annual cost of \$36,403 in tuition and \$72,366 for overtime to fill coverage requirements.