

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

An Act Regarding Court Facilities in York County

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

Sec. 1. 4 MRSA §1610-L is enacted to read:

§ 1610-L. Additional securities; judicial branch and York County

Notwithstanding any limitation on the amount of securities that may be issued pursuant to section 1606, subsection 2, the authority may issue additional securities from time to time in an aggregate amount not to exceed \$6,000,000 outstanding at any one time for the purposes of paying the costs associated with the planning, purchasing, financing, acquiring, constructing, furnishing and equipping new facilities and projects relating to the judicial branch in York County for the exclusive use of York County to accommodate the office of the district attorney.

Sec. 2. Construction to accommodate office of York County district attorney. The judicial branch shall hold in reserve a portion of the property on which the new courthouse in Biddeford is to be built to be used for the construction of a building and adequate parking to accommodate the office of the York County district attorney. The judicial branch and York County shall work together to acquire the services of an architect and construction manager for the project, the costs of which must be included as a cost of the Biddeford courthouse design and construction project.

Sec. 3. Construction of York County facilities. The judicial branch, working with York County, shall construct the building that is to accommodate the office of the York County district attorney in Biddeford pursuant to section 1 using the funding provided by the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 4, section 1610-L, and York County shall pay the debt service in lieu of paying rent. The building systems, including but not limited to, heating, ventilation, electrical, water and sewerage systems, must be separate from those of the courthouse, and York County is responsible for costs associated with the operation and maintenance of the building that accommodates the office of the York County district attorney.

Sec. 4. Lease; purchase. The judicial branch shall lease the land on which the building that accommodates the office of the York County district attorney is built pursuant to section 1 to York County for \$1 until the debt service on the bonds issued under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 4, section 1610-L is fully paid, at which time the judicial branch shall transfer the land and building to York County for consideration of \$1.

Sec. 5. Ownership of courthouses. The State shall transfer, without consideration, the ownership of the 3 district courthouses in York County to be vacated when the courts are consolidated into one building in Biddeford to York County for exclusive use by York County.

SUMMARY

This bill resolves logistical issues created by the construction of a consolidated courthouse for York County in Biddeford. Earlier legislation that authorized construction of the courthouse did not factor in

adequate space for the office of the district attorney, a required component of the judicial process. This bill provides for the construction of a building of sufficient size to accommodate the office of the district attorney to be connected to the new courthouse. This bill authorizes the issuance of up to \$6,000,000 in Maine Government Facilities Authority securities to construct the building, but the planning and design, a joint project by the judicial branch and York County, will be covered by the existing funding of the courthouse.

The goal of this bill is to make the new building as cost-neutral to the parties as possible. York County will pay the debt service on the bonds and pay annual rent for the land of \$1 until the debt service is fully paid, at which time the State will transfer the land and building to York County for \$1. In addition, the 3 district court buildings vacated when the new consolidated courthouse opens must be transferred at no cost to York County for its exclusive use.