



# 130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

LD 305

LR 897(01)

## An Act To Include Forest Rangers and Forest Fire Prevention Specialists in the Bureau of Forestry's Forest Protection Unit in the Laws Concerning Cancer Suffered by Firefighters

### Preliminary Fiscal Impact Statement for Original Bill

Sponsor: Sen. Cyrway of Kennebec

Committee: Labor and Housing

Fiscal Note Required: Yes

### Preliminary Fiscal Impact Statement

Potential current biennium cost increase - Worker's Compensation Management Fund

Potential future biennium cost increase - General Fund

#### Fiscal Detail and Notes

Adding forest rangers and forest fire prevention specialists in the forest protection unit within the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Forestry, to the definition of a firefighter that may qualify for workers' compensation benefits under a rebuttable presumption contained in Title 39-A, §328-B may increase costs to the Workers' Compensation Management Fund within the Department of Administrative and Financial Services beginning in fiscal year 2021-22. The impact to the Fund will depend on actual experience.

According to the State's data warehouse, there are currently 57 filled and 9 vacant forest rangers and forest fire prevention specialists positions in the Bureau of Forestry. Although the exact cost to the State related to lost time and medical costs will depend on actual experience, the average cost in lost time benefits for this group of employees is estimated to be \$38,467 per claim per year for up to 10 years or more, depending on the level of the employees incapacity. Additionally, the cost for one fatality who has a minor child is estimated to be \$369,873 in lost time benefits alone.

This provision may also increase General Fund costs to the Bureau of Forestry within the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry from increased workers' compensation premiums. The State, as a self-insured entity, charges each state agency a premium rate that is built into the cost associated with each position within an agency. That rate is based on the actual claims experience of each agency and is averaged over a three-year period. The future impact to the premium rate for the Bureau of Forestry will be based on actual experience.