



128th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2017

Legislative Document

No. 959

S.P. 315

In Senate, March 9, 2017

An Act To Expand Property Tax Relief for Maine Residents

Reference to the Committee on Taxation suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Heather J.R. Priest".

HEATHER J.R. PRIEST
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator CHENETTE of York.
Cosponsored by Representative McCREIGHT of Harpswell and
Senators: BELLOWS of Kennebec, DOW of Lincoln, LIBBY of Androscoggin,
Representatives: COOPER of Yarmouth, TERRY of Gorham.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 5 MRSA §1536, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2015, c. 267, Pt. L, §8, is
3 further amended to read:

4 **1. Final priority reserves.** After the transfers to the State Contingent Account
5 pursuant to section 1507, the transfers to the Loan Insurance Reserve pursuant to section
6 1511, the transfers pursuant to section 1522, a transfer of \$2,500,000 for the Reserve for
7 General Fund Operating Capital ~~and~~, the transfers to the Retiree Health Insurance Internal
8 Service Fund pursuant to section 1519 and the transfer to the Property Tax Fairness
9 Credit Fund pursuant to Title 36, section 5219-KK, subsection 4, the State Controller
10 shall transfer at the close of each fiscal year from the unappropriated surplus of the
11 General Fund an amount equal to the amount available from the unappropriated surplus
12 after all required deductions of appropriations, budgeted financial commitments and
13 adjustments considered necessary by the State Controller have been made as follows:

14 A. Eighty percent to the stabilization fund; and

15 F. Twenty percent to the Tax Relief Fund for Maine Residents established in section
16 1518-A.

17 **Sec. 2. 36 MRSA §5219-KK, sub-§4** is enacted to read:

18 **4. Property Tax Fairness Credit Fund.** There is created the Property Tax Fairness
19 Credit Fund, referred to in this section as "the fund," which must be used to increase
20 benefits under the credit established in this section. The fund consists of all resources
21 transferred to the fund under Title 5, section 1536, subsection 1 and other resources made
22 available to the fund.

23 A. Beginning with fiscal year 2017-18, the State Controller shall transfer to the fund
24 at the close of each fiscal year from the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund
25 after all required deductions of appropriations, budgeted financial commitments and
26 adjustments considered necessary by the State Controller have been made pursuant to
27 Title 5, section 1536, subsection 1, and prior to the transfers required under Title 5,
28 section 1536, subsection 1, paragraphs A and F, 1% of the amount available from the
29 unappropriated surplus after all required deductions of appropriations, budgeted
30 financial commitments and adjustments considered necessary by the State Controller
31 have been made.

32 B. By September 1, 2018 and annually thereafter, the State Controller shall inform
33 the State Tax Assessor of the amount available in the fund for the purposes of this
34 subsection.

35 C. By November 1st annually, the State Tax Assessor shall calculate, based on the
36 amount available in the fund, the percentage by which the maximum credit for
37 individuals under 65 years of age and the maximum credit for individuals 65 years of
38 age or older under subsection 2 may be increased. The State Tax Assessor shall
39 provide public notice of any increase in the maximum credit calculated under this
40 paragraph. New maximum credits calculated under this paragraph apply beginning

1 with tax years that begin on or after January 1st of the calendar year following the
2 determinations made under this paragraph.

3 D. Any unexpended balance in the fund may not lapse but must be carried forward to
4 be used pursuant this subsection.

5 E. In the fiscal years immediately following the calculation of the increase in
6 maximum credits under this subsection, the State Tax Assessor shall certify to the
7 State Controller the amount of the reduction in General Fund revenue by fiscal year,
8 and the State Controller shall transfer from the fund the amount certified for the
9 reduction in revenue attributable to adjustments made under this subsection to the
10 General Fund unappropriated surplus.

11 **SUMMARY**

12 This bill requires that 1% of surplus General Fund revenue be transferred annually to
13 a nonlapsing fund to be used to increase the maximum property tax fairness credit.