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Legislative Document

No. 1467

S.P. 541

In Senate, April 30, 2013

**Resolve, To Establish a Demonstration Project To Promote
Economic Development in the Forest Products Industry**

(AFTER DEADLINE)

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 205.

Reference to the Committee on Transportation suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D M Grant'.

DAREK M. GRANT
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator JACKSON of Aroostook.
Cosponsored by Representative THERIAULT of Madawaska and
Senators: President ALFOND of Cumberland, MAZUREK of Knox, SHERMAN of
Aroostook, THIBODEAU of Waldo, Representatives: PARRY of Arundel, SAUCIER of
Presque Isle.

1 **Sec. 1. Demonstration project. Resolved:** That the Commissioner of
2 Transportation shall establish a demonstration project in the Town of Ashland for the
3 purpose of demonstrating cost-effective ways of promoting economic development in the
4 forest products industry by facilitating the transportation of forest product-related
5 materials, including logs and wood biomass, from product-harvesting sites to processing
6 and transportation facilities.

7 **1. Designation of route.** As part of the demonstration project, the Commissioner of
8 Transportation may designate a demonstration transportation route, including sections of
9 Maine Route 11 and including the Aroostook River bridge crossing and sections of the
10 so-called Garfield Road in the Town of Ashland as needed to establish a connection
11 between wood processing activities anticipated to be located at the former Levesque Mill
12 site in Ashland and the so-called Realty Road connection to the extended private logging
13 road system serving Aroostook County.

14 **2. Gross vehicle weight exceptions.** As part of the demonstration project, the
15 Commissioner of Transportation, after consultation with the Department of Public Safety
16 and the Secretary of State, may authorize the use of certain types of vehicles on the
17 demonstration transportation route with gross vehicle weights up to 200,000 pounds for
18 transportation of logs and wood biomass.

19 **3. Safety.** Prior to designating the demonstration transportation route, the
20 Commissioner of Transportation shall:

21 A. Consult with the Ashland Town Council and residents of the area affected by the
22 proposed route and consider any resulting comments regarding safety, economic
23 development and other potential effects from an increase in gross vehicle weight
24 limits; and

25 B. Require the chief engineer of the Department of Transportation to determine that
26 the state highways and bridges involved in the demonstration project can safely
27 accommodate increased weight limits and identify any improvements or operating
28 limitations needed to ensure safe operation over the demonstration transportation
29 route and to preserve state highway assets.

30 **4. Funding.** Subject to the availability of funds, the Department of Transportation
31 may fund up to 50% of the cost of highway and bridge improvements necessary to
32 support the demonstration transportation route. The balance of funding must be provided
33 by private or public sources other than the department.

34 **5. Report.** The Department of Transportation shall provide a report to the joint
35 standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over transportation matters by
36 January 15, 2015 regarding the demonstration project. The report must describe the
37 status of the project, the anticipated effects of the project and lessons learned from the
38 development and operation of the project that may be applied to similar projects when
39 increased gross vehicle weights on state highways may be a desirable catalyst for
40 improved intermodal freight connectivity and economic development.

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SUMMARY

2 This resolve requires the Commissioner of Transportation to establish a
3 demonstration project in the Town of Ashland for the purpose of demonstrating cost-
4 effective ways of promoting economic development in the forest products industry by
5 facilitating the transportation of forest product-related materials, including logs and wood
6 biomass, from product-harvesting sites to processing and transportation facilities by
7 increasing the gross vehicle weights permitted on a demonstration transportation route
8 connecting forest product harvesting sites with potential processing facilities. The
9 demonstration project requires consideration of safety issues and other effects and input
10 from the Town of Ashland. The commissioner is required to report on the demonstration
11 project to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over
12 transportation matters by January 15, 2015.