



Senator James Dill
3 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0003
(207) 287-1515
James.Dill@legislature.maine.gov

Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Introducing LD 268, An Act to Eliminate Online Burn Permit Fees for All Areas of the State

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Good morning Representative O’Neil and honorable members of the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee, as you know, I am Senator Jim Dill and I represent Senate District 5. I’m here today to introduce LD 268, “An Act to Eliminate Online Burn Permit Fees for All Areas of the State.”

I introduced this same bill during the 129th Legislature, and the ACF committee, along with the full Legislature, passed it unanimously. Unfortunately, with the quick end to our session last spring, the bill died on the appropriations table. Like the title suggests, the bill would eliminate fees for using the online burn permit system.

Burn permits help us prevent wildfires in Maine. They encourage safe burn practices, and alert local officials as to where a burn is happening. Currently, it costs a user \$7.00 to purchase an open burn permit online, though anyone can still get a hand-written permit from town fire officials or forest rangers for free. In this modern day and age, especially now when everyone is trying to limit their social interactions, removing any barriers to using the online system is key. That’s why eliminating the \$7.00 fee is important. A free online system will increase the use of burn permits, increasing safety and adding to our wildfire prevention efforts.

In addition to making the online system free, the bill would also allow a municipality to pay to use a private party burn permit system.

Thank you for your time, and I will take any questions you may have.