

OFFICE OF POLICY AND LEGAL ANALYSIS

Date: May 12, 2021

To: Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee

From: Janet Stocco, Legislative Analyst

LD 1537 **An Act To Restore Funding to the Southern Maine Veterans Cemetery** (*Rep. Tuttle*)

SUMMARY

The bill provides General Fund appropriations of \$68,162 in fiscal year 2021-22 and \$89,650 in fiscal year 2022-23 to the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management for one Heavy Equipment Operator II position and one Groundskeeper II position at the Southern Maine Veterans Cemetery in Springvale.

ISSUES RAISED AT PUBLIC HEARING

The Director of the Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services submitted testimony explaining as follows:

- Until last summer, the SMVC was “fully staffed” with: “one working Supervisor, one Equipment Operator, and one Groundskeeper II.” Last summer, the equipment operator position became vacant and was difficult to fill, because the pay was insufficient to attract appropriate candidates.
- The bureau received approval to reclassify the equipment operator position to a higher pay grade in recognition of the duties and responsibilities of the position.

Analyst Note: [Page A-131](#) of the Governor’s proposed biennial budget ([LD 221](#)) included an initiative to fund this reclassification using General Fund dollars (see below). The VLA Committee unanimously (of those present) voted in favor of this initiative. Although it was not included in the recently enacted biennial budget, *see* [P.L. 2021, ch. 29 \(LD 715\)](#), the bureau testified that this initiative remains part of the Governor’s supplemental budget proposal moving forward.

	2021-22	2022-23
Initiative: Provides funding for the approved reorganization of a Heavy Equipment Operator I to a Heavy Equipment Operator II within the same program.		
GENERAL FUND		
Personal Services	11,380	10,173
Total	11,380	10,173

- In addition, the bureau has issued a request for proposals (RFP) to implement a seasonal mowing and trimming contract for the SMVC, which will be funded with federal revenues. The bureau intends that this contract will relieve the workload of existing SMVC staff, to enable them to focus on completing burials, installing headstones and completing routine maintenance.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

None.

FISCAL IMPACT

Preliminary Fiscal Impact: Appropriations of \$68,162 in FY 21-22 and \$89,650 in FY 22-23 are required to fund the two new positions in the bill.