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STATE OF MAINE

ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE

COMMITTEE ON INLAND FISHERIES AND WILDLIFE

TO: Senator, Bill Diamond, Senate Chair
Representative, Emily Ann Cain, House Chair
Members, Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

FROM: Senator Bruce S. Bryant, Senate Chair
Representative Herbert E. Clark, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

DATE: January 26, 2010

SUBJ: Committee report on LD 1671 Supplemental Budget for FY 2010 and 2011

The Joint Standing Committee on Inland Fisheries and Wildlife voted 12-0 to support those provisions of the Governor's supplemental budget (LD 1671) within the jurisdiction of the committee except the committee voted 12-0 to oppose Part DDD and Part TT as it applies to the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's dedicated accounts. The committee also voted (12-0) to recommend that \$100,000 be transferred from the department's carrying account to fund an investigation into a suspected mildew problem at the Gray Headquarters facility and to determine the feasibility of renovating the existing Gray Headquarters versus construction of a new facility. The committee's recommendations are detailed below.

A. Part DDD. While the committee understands the need to look for efficiencies among the four natural resource related agencies, we believe the current proposal in Part DDD is seriously flawed and will not result in the sought after efficiencies or savings. Some of our concerns with Part DDD are:

1. Section DDD-2 establishes a working group to find \$1,250,000 in saving from the four agencies but the membership contains no legislators or members from any of the departments or stakeholder groups. We feel the working group's decisions will have significant policy implications and those decisions need to be based on an in depth understanding of how the departments function. Therefore, it is important that legislators and department officials are present on the working group in order to achieve the efficiencies and savings in a feasible and equitable manner without unduly reducing agency services.

2. We believe the Governor's previous working group on consolidation of these agencies determined that the objectives in Section DDD-3 will actually cost more to implement than will be saved; and

3. A deadline of March 15, 2010 (Section DDD-4) does not provide enough time to allow the working group to make careful and well-considered decisions. Finding \$1,250,000 in savings from these agencies after seven years of budget reductions without compromising core functions will not be an easy task. The working group needs more time than allotted in this Part to identify ways to meet those goals with minimal reductions in public services.

B. Part TT. The committee opposes taking money from any of the dedicated accounts within the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife pursuant to Part TT. The department has collected these funds from the people of Maine with the understanding that they will be used to support a specific program. Sweeping dedicated accounts for unrelated purposes fosters a distrust between the public and government and decreases the public's willingness to continue to pay into these dedicated accounts.

C. Gray Headquarters recommendation. The Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife has informed our committee that the Gray Headquarters shows signs of a mildew problem that may compromise the health of employees working in that building. We strongly recommend a transfer of \$100,000 from the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife's carry account to the department to determine the extent of the mildew problem and how best to deal with the problem whether through renovation or the construction of a new headquarters facility. We have provided the amendment language below.

PART ?

Sec. ____ . Transfer of funds from Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Carrying Balances-GF account. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the State Controller shall transfer \$100,000 on or before July 31, 2010 from the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Carrying Balances-GF account, to the Administrative Services-Inland Fisheries and Wildlife program, General Fund account to conduct feasibility and investigative studies for renovation of existing Gray Headquarters facility versus construction of a new headquarters facility based on programming, schematic and preliminary design.

SUMMARY

This part authorizes the State Controller to transfer \$100,000 from the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, Carrying Balances-GF account, to the Administrative Services-Inland Fisheries and Wildlife program, General Fund account to conduct an investigative study to determine the extent of the mildew infestation and in light of that study the feasibility of renovating the existing Gray Headquarters facility versus construction of a new headquarters facility based on programming, schematic and preliminary design.

Thank you for your consideration of our recommendations.

cc: Patrick Norton, Director, Office of Policy and Legal Analysis