

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND AND THIRTEEN

H.P. 861 - L.D. 1216

An Act To Amend the Freedom of Access Act

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

Sec. 1. 1 MRSA §408-A, sub-§3, as enacted by PL 2011, c. 662, §5, is amended to read:

3. Acknowledgment; clarification; time estimate; cost estimate. The agency or official having custody or control of a public record shall acknowledge receipt of a request made according to this section within ~~a reasonable period of time~~, 5 working days of receiving the request and may request clarification concerning which public record or public records are being requested. ~~The~~ Within a reasonable time of receiving the request, the agency or official shall provide a good faith, nonbinding estimate of the time within which the agency or official will comply with the request, as well as a cost estimate as provided in subsection 9. The agency or official shall make a good faith effort to fully respond to the request within the estimated time.

Sec. 2. 1 MRSA §408-A, sub-§4, as enacted by PL 2011, c. 662, §5, is amended to read:

4. Refusals; denials. If a body or an agency or official having custody or control of any public record refuses permission to inspect or copy or abstract a public record, the body or agency or official shall provide written notice of the denial, stating the reason for the denial, within 5 working days of the receipt of the request for inspection or copying. Failure to comply with this subsection is considered failure to allow inspection or copying and is subject to appeal as provided in section 409.

Sec. 3. 1 MRSA §409, sub-§1, as amended by PL 2011, c. 559, Pt. A, §1 and c. 662, §6, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

1. Records. Any person aggrieved by a refusal or denial to inspect or copy a record or the failure to allow the inspection or copying of a record under section 408-A may appeal the refusal, denial or failure within 30 calendar days of the receipt of the written notice of refusal, denial or failure to any Superior Court within the State as a trial de

novo. The agency or official shall file an answer within 14 calendar days. If a court, after a trial de novo, determines such refusal, denial or failure was not for just and proper cause, the court shall enter an order for disclosure. Appeals may be advanced on the docket and receive priority over other cases when the court determines that the interests of justice so require.