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STATE OF MAINE
ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY

TO: Senator Margaret Rotundo, Senate Chair
Representative Drew Gattine, House Chair, and
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

FROM: Senator Rachel Talbot Ross, Senate Chair *RTR KSN*
Representative William Pluecker, House Chair, and *WPP*
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

DATE: March 5, 2026

RE: Supplemental Budget (LD 2212) Recommendations

The Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee is pleased to submit the following report (see attached) for the proposed supplemental budget initiatives under the Committee’s jurisdiction for fiscal years ending 2026 and 2027. The Committee voted unanimously in favor all initiatives and language parts with the following exceptions.

- Upon the recommendation of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (ACF), the Committee voted in opposition to Section V-1 and in favor of Section V-2 under Language Part V and voted in opposition to Language Part Z.
- A majority of the Committee voted in favor of Language Part F as amended (see attached). A minority report for Language Part F as amended is also attached.

While the Committee voted unanimously in favor of Language Part AA, there is pending legislation (LD 2118) which will impact sections AA-2 and AA-3. Recently, the Committee voted unanimously “ought to pass as amended” on LD 2118, which moves the Natural Areas Program from the Department of ACF to the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IFW). Sections AA-2 and AA-3 authorize the Department of ACF to transfer Personal Services (if available) to the All Other line category for initiatives related to the Natural Areas Program. If LD 2118 moves forward and is enacted, the Committee recommends that the language related to fiscal year 2027 be included in the Department of IFW portions of the budget rather than the Department of ACF portions of the budget. State fiscal year 2026 language provisions are accurate since the Natural Areas Program is currently within the Department of ACF; however, failure to include similar language in the Department of IFW portion of the budget for state fiscal year 2027 would leave these initiatives unaddressed for the program.

Finally, the Committee would like to express our strong support of Language Part S within the Department of Administrative and Financial Services to support the Department of ACF's geographic information systems environment. Language Part S is under the jurisdiction of the State and Local Government Committee.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

c: Members, Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
 Members, Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Sec. A-2. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY, DEPARTMENT OF

Bureau of Agriculture 0393

Initiative: Continues one limited-period Contract/Grant Manager position previously continued by Financial Order CV0824 F6 to create sustained capacity within the Bureau to administer both one-time and ongoing financial assistance programs. This position will end on June 19, 2027.

Ref. #: 40 One Time Committee Vote: IN 7-0 AFA Vote: _____

| OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 |
|--|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Personal Services | \$0 | \$0 | \$67,698 |
| All Other | \$0 | \$0 | \$3,388 |
| OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL | <u>\$0</u> | <u>\$0</u> | <u>\$71,086</u> |

Justification:

Resolves 2025, chapter 26 (LD 606) and the Final Report of the Dairy Task Force are just two recent examples of calls for the Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources to simplify and make more accessible its financial assistance programs. There is currently only one permanent grants management position in a bureau that regularly administers at least five annual grant programs and is often tasked with deploying various pots of one-time funding. Ongoing staffing for contract and grants management will ensure optimal internal procedures, stakeholder service, and metrics tracking.

Bureau of Agriculture 0393

Initiative: Transfers funding from fiscal year 2026-27 to fiscal year 2025-26 for equipment upgrades at the Milk Quality Laboratory.

Ref. #: 41 One Time Committee Vote: IN 7-0 AFA Vote: _____

| GENERAL FUND | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 |
|---------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| Capital Expenditures | \$0 | \$75,000 | (\$75,000) |
| GENERAL FUND TOTAL | <u>\$0</u> | <u>\$75,000</u> | <u>(\$75,000)</u> |

Justification:

Public Law 2025, chapter 388 appropriated funds to replace a somatic cell counter for the Milk Quality Laboratory in FY27. The current equipment is failing and needs to be replaced as soon as possible to avoid expensive repair costs.

DACF Administration 0401

Initiative: Provides funding for the approved range change of one Natural Resource Marketing and Economic Development Specialist position from range 32 to range 35, retroactive to August 4, 2023.

Ref. #: 43 Committee Vote: IN 7-0 AFA Vote: _____

| GENERAL FUND | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 |
|---------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|---------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|

LD 2212 - ACF REPORT BACK

Initiative: Provides funding for the approved reorganization of one Senior Technician position to a Lead Technician position. This initiative also provides funding for related All Other costs.

Ref. #: 68

Committee Vote: IN 7-0

AFA Vote: _____

| OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 |
|--|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Personal Services | \$0 | \$0 | \$11,536 |
| All Other | \$0 | \$0 | \$514 |
| OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL | \$0 | \$0 | \$12,050 |

Notes:

Not Part of the Public Hearing. Policy Committees need not make a recommendation on approved Reclassification, Reorganization and Range Change initiatives.

Justification:

This management-initiated reorganization was approved by the Bureau of Human Resources on January 6, 2026.

Milk Commission 0188

Initiative: Provides funding to align allocations with projected expenditures and available resources.

Ref. #: 33

Committee Vote: IN 7-0

AFA Vote: _____

| OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 |
|--|----------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| All Other | \$0 | \$5,674,198 | (\$1,654,305) |
| OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL | \$0 | \$5,674,198 | (\$1,654,305) |

Justification:

This initiative provides funding to align allocations with projected expenditures and available resources.

Off-Road Recreational Vehicles Program Z224

Initiative: Provides funding to align allocations with projected expenditures and available resources.

Ref. #: 49

Committee Vote: IN 7-0

AFA Vote: _____

| OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 |
|--|----------------|------------------|------------------|
| All Other | \$0 | \$803,132 | \$804,726 |
| OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL | \$0 | \$803,132 | \$804,726 |

LD 2212 - ACF REPORT BACK

| | | | |
|--|------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| POSITIONS - LEGISLATIVE COUNT | 0.000 | (1.000) | (1.000) |
| Personal Services | \$0 | (\$14,399) | (\$60,003) |
| All Other | \$0 | (\$721) | (\$3,004) |
| FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND TOTAL | \$0 | (\$15,120) | (\$63,007) |

Ref. #: 36

Committee Vote: IN 7-0

AFA Vote: _____

| | | | |
|--|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 |
| POSITIONS - LEGISLATIVE COUNT | 0.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| Personal Services | \$0 | \$14,399 | \$60,003 |
| All Other | \$0 | \$721 | \$3,004 |
| OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL | \$0 | \$15,120 | \$63,007 |

Justification:

This initiative will align work effort with appropriate funding.

AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY, DEPARTMENT OF

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| DEPARTMENT TOTALS | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 |
| GENERAL FUND | \$0 | \$2,409,802 | \$500,791 |
| FEDERAL EXPENDITURES FUND | \$0 | (\$35,518) | (\$418,577) |
| OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS | \$0 | \$5,117,109 | (\$1,764,667) |
| DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS | \$0 | \$7,491,393 | (\$1,682,453) |

Sec. A-15. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

FINANCE AUTHORITY OF MAINE

Dairy Improvement Fund Z143

Initiative: Reduces funding to align allocations with projected expenditures and available resources.

Ref. #: 284

Committee Vote: IN 7-0 AFA Vote: _____

| OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 |
|--|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| All Other | \$0 | (\$15,818) | (\$31,944) |
| OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL | \$0 | (\$15,818) | (\$31,944) |

Justification:

This initiative provides funding to align allocations with projected expenditures and available resources.

FINANCE AUTHORITY OF MAINE

| DEPARTMENT TOTALS | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS | \$0 | (\$15,818) | (\$31,944) |
| DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS | \$0 | (\$15,818) | (\$31,944) |

Sec. B-1. Appropriations and allocations. The following appropriations and allocations are made.

AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY, DEPARTMENT OF

DACF Administration 0401

Initiative: RECLASSIFICATIONS

Ref. #: 44 One Time Committee Vote: _____ AFA Vote: _____

| GENERAL FUND | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 |
|---------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Personal Services | \$0 | \$42,487 | \$0 |
| All Other | \$0 | (\$42,487) | \$0 |
| GENERAL FUND TOTAL | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |

Notes:

Not Part of the Public Hearing. Policy Committees need not make a recommendation on approved Reclassification, Reorganization and Range Change initiatives.

AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND FORESTRY, DEPARTMENT OF

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| DEPARTMENT TOTALS | 2024-25 | 2025-26 | 2026-27 |
| GENERAL FUND | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |

Language Parts

Part F-1 (see pg: 13)

Committee Vote: AMD 7-1 AFA Vote: _____

Part U (see pg: 13)

Committee Vote: IN 7-0 AFA Vote: _____

Part V (see pg: 14)

Committee Vote: AMD 7-0 AFA Vote: _____

Part W (see pg: 15)

Committee Vote: IN 7-0 AFA Vote: _____

Part X (see pg: 16)

Committee Vote: IN 7-0 AFA Vote: _____

Part Y (see pg: 16)

Committee Vote: IN 7-0 AFA Vote: _____

Part Z (see pg: 17)

Committee Vote: OUT 7-0 AFA Vote: _____

Part AA (see pg: 17)

Committee Vote: IN 7-0 AFA Vote: _____

New:

Part UUU
(see pg: 22)

Committee Vote: IN 7-0 AFA Vote: _____

PART F

Sec. F-1. 5 MRSA §1532, sub-§9, is amended to read:

See attached majority
report and minority report.
(Pp. 20-21)

9. Emergency funding for nonprofit food banks. During a state of emergency declared in accordance with Title 37B, section 742, subsection 1 that exceeds 10 days, the Governor, in accordance with rules adopted by the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, may distribute up to \$400,000,000 from the stabilization fund to nonprofit entities, including food banks, food pantries and soup kitchens, that provide or distribute food to low-income, indigent or unemployed individuals or households without charge. The Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall adopt rules to prescribe the manner in which the funds distributed under this subsection must be disbursed. The commissioner may leverage funds distributed under this subsection to match any relevant federal funding available for qualifying food programs in the State. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as described in chapter 375, subchapter 2A. The Governor may not suspend under Title 37B, section 742, subsection 1, paragraph C, subparagraph (1) rules adopted under this subsection.

**PART F
SUMMARY**

This Part changes the amount to \$4,000,000 that the Governor, during a declared state of emergency, in accordance with rules adopted by the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, may distribute from the stabilization fund to nonprofit entities, including food banks, food pantries and soup kitchens, that provide or distribute food to low-income, indigent or unemployed individuals or households, without charge. *Additionally, this Part authorizes that the Governor, during a declared state of emergency, may distribute from the stabilization fund up to \$1,500,000 to Maine State Housing Authority for administration of benefit payments for emergency heating assistance, without charge. [Note this is F-2 which is under HED]*

PART U

Sec. U-1. 7 MRSA §220-A, as amended by PL 2025, c. 388, Pt. TT, §1, is further amended to read:

Subchapter 4: Farmers Drought Relief Grant Resilience Program

§220-A. Farmers Drought Relief Grant Resilience Program

- 1. Grant program established.** The Farmers Drought Relief Grant Resilience Program, referred to in this section as "the program," is established in the department to assist farmers in the State to overcome the adverse effects of drought conditions by providing grants in accordance with this section.

2. **Eligibility.** A farmer in the State may apply for a grant under the program if the farmer needs to establish a source for irrigation water to alleviate the risk of crop losses due to drought. The source for irrigation water must be sustainable, environmentally sound and affordable.
3. **Farmers Drought Relief Grant Resilience Program Fund.** The Farmers Drought Relief Grant Resilience Program Fund is established as a nonlapsing fund to provide funding to achieve the purposes of the program. The fund consists of any funds received from private and public sources. The fund must be held separate and apart from all other money, funds and accounts. Any balance remaining in the fund at the end of any fiscal year must be carried forward to the next fiscal year.
4. **Rules.** The department shall adopt rules to implement the program. The rules must include grant eligibility requirements, grant application and award procedures and grant funding limits. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2A.

PART U SUMMARY

This Part changes the name of the Farmers Drought Relief Grant Program to the Farmers Drought Resilience Program in statute.

PART V

Sec. V-1. 12 MRSA §1849, sub-§2, as amended by PL 2021, c. 398, Pt. W, §1 is further amended to read:

~~2. **Fund established.** All income received by the director from the public reserved lands, except income provided for in section 1855, must be deposited with the Treasurer of State to be credited to the Public Reserved Lands Management Fund, which is established as a nonlapsing fund and is subject to allocation by the Legislature. Any interest earned on this money must also be credited to the fund. No expenditure may be made from the fund other than for the bureau's general operating purposes with respect to management of the public reserved lands unless the fund has a cash operating balance of at least \$2,500,000 at the start of the fiscal year during which the expenditure is made.~~

Sec. V-2. 12 MRSA §1849, sub-§2, ¶A and ¶B, are enacted to read:

A. Conservation Easement Trust Established: The Public Reserved Lands Conservation Easement Trust Fund, referred to in this section as “the easement trust,” is a state-held trust and shall be maintained by the Treasurer in accordance with Title 5, Section 138, and established as an account

within the Land Management and Planning program. The easement trust is a nonlapsing, dedicated fund to be used only to monitor and defend conservation easements held by the Bureau of Parks and Lands. The director may accept funds from any source and may accept gifts in trust to be credited to the easement trust. Interest earned on investments in the easement trust must be credited to the easement trust. The director may use interest and earnings from the easement trust for purposes stated above. Principal from the fund may only be used with the approval of the Treasurer for extenuating circumstances, including legal defense.

B. Land Management Trust Established: The Public Reserved Lands Management Trust Fund, referred to in this section as “the land management trust,” is a state-held trust and shall be maintained by the Treasurer in accordance with Title 5, Section 138. The land management trust is a nonlapsing, dedicated fund to be used only for the management of Public Reserved Lands to which the State holds fee title or a tenancy in common. The director may accept funds from any source and may accept gifts in trust to be credited to the land management trust. Interest earned on investments in the land management trust must be credited to the land management trust. The director may use interest and earnings from the land management trust for purposes stated above. When the Public Lands Management Fund balance is above \$5,000,000, the Bureau may temporarily invest those funds above \$5,000,000 in the land management trust with the Treasurer of the State. Principal from the fund may only be used at the request of the director and approval of the Commissioner, after consultation with the Treasurer.

PART V SUMMARY

This part creates two new trusts within the Land Management and Planning program to enable the investment of funds to provide perpetual funding for conservation easement monitoring and enforcement and to enable strategic investment of funds for a balance of growth and liquidity as agreed on by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, and Treasury Departments.

PART W

Sec. W-1. Carrying provision; Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Agriculture. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, at the end of fiscal year 2025-26, the State Controller shall carry forward any unexpended balance remaining of the \$500,000 appropriated in Public Law 2021, chapter 635, in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Agriculture program, General Fund account, All Other line category to the next fiscal year to be used for replacement of the feed, seed, and fertilizer database.

PART W SUMMARY

This Part authorizes the State Controller to carry forward up to \$500,000 of unexpended balance in the All Other line category in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Agriculture program, at the end of fiscal year 2025-26 to the All Other line category for the next fiscal year in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Agriculture program, to be used to replace the feed, seed, and fertilizer database.

PART X

Sec. X-1. Carrying provision; Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Agriculture. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, at the end of fiscal year 2025-26, the State Controller shall carry forward any unexpended balance remaining of the \$1,500,000 appropriated in Public Law 2023, chapter 412, in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Agriculture program, General Fund account, Capital Expenditures line category to the next fiscal year to be used for replacement of the licensing and inspection database.

PART X SUMMARY

This Part authorizes the State Controller to carry forward up to \$1,500,000 of unexpended balance in the Capital Expenditures line category in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Agriculture program, at the end of fiscal year 2025-26 to the Capital Expenditures line category for the next fiscal year in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Agriculture program, to be used to replace the licensing and inspection database.

PART Y

Sec. Y-1. Carrying provision; Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, at the end of fiscal year 2025-26, the State Controller shall carry forward any unexpended balance remaining of the \$750,000 appropriated in Public Law 2023, chapter 412, in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Agriculture program, General Fund account, Capital Expenditures line category to the next fiscal year to be used to upgrade the Cony Road facility in Augusta.

PART Y SUMMARY

This Part authorizes the State Controller to carry forward up to \$750,000 of unexpended balance in the Capital Expenditures line category in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Agriculture program, at the end of fiscal year 2025-26 to the Capital

Expenditures line category for the next fiscal year in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Agriculture program, to be used to upgrade the Cony Road facility in Augusta.

PART Z

Sec. Z-1. Carrying provision; Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Parks – General Operations. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, the State Controller shall carry forward any unexpended balance remaining of the \$1,000,000 appropriated for capital infrastructure improvements to Telos Dam, in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Parks - General Operations program, General Fund account, Capital Expenditures line category to the next fiscal year to be used for capital infrastructure improvements to Telos Dam in the Allagash Wilderness Waterway.

PART Z SUMMARY

This Part authorizes the State Controller to carry forward up to \$1,000,000 of unexpended balance in the Capital Expenditures line category in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Parks – General Operations program at the end of each fiscal year to the Capital Expenditures line category for the next fiscal year in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Parks – General Operations program to be used for capital infrastructure improvements to Telos Dam in the Allagash Wilderness Waterway.

PART AA

Sec. AA-1. Transfer of Personal Services balances to All Other; Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, for fiscal year 2025-26, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry is authorized to transfer up to \$46,024 and for fiscal year 2026-27, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry is authorized to transfer up to \$48,000, of available balance of Personal Services appropriations after all salary, benefit and other obligations are met, to the All Other line category of the Maine Conservation Corps program for the purpose of funding four vehicle leases. These amounts may be transferred by financial order upon the recommendation of the State Budget Officer and approval of the Governor. These transfers are not considered adjustments to appropriations.

Sec. AA-2. Transfer of Personal Services balances to All Other; Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, for fiscal year 2025-26, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry is authorized to transfer up to \$30,000 and for fiscal year 2026-27, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry is authorized to transfer up to \$120,000, of available balance of Personal Services appropriations after all salary, benefit and other obligations are met, to the All Other line category of the Natural Areas Program for the purpose of funding early detection and rapid response to

eradicate invasive stilt grass. These amounts may be transferred by financial order upon the recommendation of the State Budget Officer and approval of the Governor. These transfers are not considered adjustments to appropriations.

Sec. AA-3. Transfer of Personal Services balances to All Other; Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, for fiscal year 2026-27, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry is authorized to transfer up to \$25,000, of available balance of Personal Services appropriations after all salary, benefit and other obligations are met, to the All Other line category of the Natural Areas Program for the purpose of funding an update to Maine's Official List of Threatened and Endangered Plants. These amounts may be transferred by financial order upon the recommendation of the State Budget Officer and approval of the Governor. These transfers are not considered adjustments to appropriations.

Sec. AA-4. Transfer of Personal Services balances to All Other; Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, for fiscal year 2025-26, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry is authorized to transfer up to \$83,507 and for fiscal year 2026-27, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry is authorized to transfer up to \$76,136, of available balance of Personal Services appropriations after all salary, benefit and other obligations are met, to the All Other line category of the DACF Administration program for the purposes of funding an upgrade to the Land Use Planning Commission Geographic Oriented Action Tracker database, geographic information system expenses, and equipment and licenses required to utilize the human resource management system. These amounts may be transferred by financial order upon the recommendation of the State Budget Officer and approval of the Governor. These transfers are not considered adjustments to appropriations.

Sec. AA-5. Transfer of Personal Services balances to All Other; Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, for fiscal year 2026-27, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry is authorized to transfer up to \$40,000, of available balance of Personal Services appropriations after all salary, benefit and other obligations are met, to the All Other line category of the Maine Land Use Planning Commission program for the purpose of funding stakeholder engagement in preparation for updates to the Comprehensive Land Use Plan. These amounts may be transferred by financial order upon the recommendation of the State Budget Officer and approval of the Governor. These transfers are not considered adjustments to appropriations.

Sec. AA-6. Transfer of Personal Services balances to Capital Expenditures; Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, for fiscal year 2025-26, the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry is authorized to transfer up to \$77,000, of available balance of Personal Services appropriations after all salary, benefit and other obligations are met, to the Capital Expenditures line category of the Division of Forest Protection program for the purpose of funding facility maintenance at the Old Town hangar. These amounts may be transferred by financial order upon the recommendation of the

State Budget Officer and approval of the Governor. These transfers are not considered adjustments to appropriations.

**PART AA
SUMMARY**

This Part authorizes the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry to transfer, Personal Services to the All Other and Capital Expenditures line categories in order to fund four vehicle leases, early detection and rapid response to eradicate invasive stilt grass, stakeholder engagement in preparation for updating the Comprehensive Land Use Plan, an update to Maine's Official List of Threatened and Endangered Plants, an upgrade to the Land Use Planning Commission Geographic Oriented Action Tracker database, geographic information system expenses, equipment and licenses needed to access the human resource management system, and for facility maintenance of the Old Town hangar.

Amendment to Language Part F – MAJORITY REPORT

Sec. F-1. 5 MRSA §1532, sub-§9, is amended to read:

9. Emergency funding for nonprofit food banks. During a state of emergency declared in accordance with Title 37-B, section 742, subsection 1 that exceeds 10 days, the Governor, in accordance with rules adopted by the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, may distribute up to ~~\$400,000~~~~4,000,000~~ \$8,000,000 from the stabilization fund to nonprofit entities, including food banks, food pantries and soup kitchens, that provide or distribute food to low-income, indigent or unemployed individuals or households without charge. The Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall adopt rules to prescribe the manner in which the funds distributed under this subsection must be disbursed and, to the extent practicable, ensure that distribution of food under this subsection provides equitable access to healthy and culturally appropriate food and reaches a diverse population of persons experiencing food insecurity in the state. The commissioner may leverage funds distributed under this subsection to match any relevant federal funding available for qualifying food programs in the State. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as described in chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. The Governor may not suspend under Title 37-B, section 742, subsection 1, paragraph C, subparagraph (1) rules adopted under this subsection.

SUMMARY

This amendment, which is the majority report of the committee, increases the amount that the Governor, during a declared state of emergency, in accordance with rules adopted by the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, may distribute from the stabilization fund to nonprofit entities that provide or distribute food to low-income, indigent or unemployed individuals or households, without charge, from \$4,000,000 to \$8,000,000.

The amendment also clarifies that the commissioner is directed to adopt rules, to the extent practicable, to ensure that distribution of food provides equitable access to healthy and culturally appropriate food and reaches a diverse population of persons experiencing food insecurity in the state.

Amendment to Language Part F – MINORITY REPORT

Sec. F-1. 5 MRSA §1532, sub-§9, is amended to read:

9. Emergency funding for nonprofit food banks. During a state of emergency declared in accordance with Title 37-B, section 742, subsection 1 that exceeds 10 days, the Governor, in accordance with rules adopted by the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, may distribute up to ~~\$400,000~~ \$4,000,000 from the stabilization fund to nonprofit entities, including food banks, food pantries and soup kitchens, that provide or distribute food to low-income, indigent or unemployed individuals or households without charge. The Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry shall adopt rules to prescribe the manner in which the funds distributed under this subsection must be disbursed and, to the extent practicable, ensure that distribution of food under this subsection provides equitable access to healthy and culturally appropriate food and reaches a diverse population of persons experiencing food insecurity in the state. The commissioner may leverage funds distributed under this subsection to match any relevant federal funding available for qualifying food programs in the State. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as described in chapter 375, subchapter 2-A. The Governor may not suspend under Title 37-B, section 742, subsection 1, paragraph C, subparagraph (1) rules adopted under this subsection.

SUMMARY

This amendment, which is the minority report of the committee, clarifies that the commissioner is directed to adopt rules, to the extent practicable, to ensure that distribution of food provides equitable access to healthy and culturally appropriate food and reaches a diverse population of persons experiencing food insecurity in the state.

PART UUU

Sec. UUU-1. 5 MRSA, §1532, sub-§4, as enacted by PL 2005, c. 2, Pt. A, §5, is amended to read:

1. **Investment of funds.** The money in the stabilization fund may be invested as provided by law ~~with the earnings credited to the stabilization fund.~~

Sec. UUU-2. 5 MRSA, §1532, sub-§4-A is enacted to read:

4-A. Investment proceeds. At the close of every month during which the stabilization fund is below the 18% limitation described in subsection 1, the State Controller shall credit investment proceeds as follows.

A. 50% of the investment earnings must be credited to the stabilization fund;

B. 25% of the investment earnings must be transferred to the Irrevocable Trust Fund for Other Post-employment Benefits established in section 286-B, subsection 2 for the state employee plan, as defined in section 286-B, subsection 1, paragraph D; and

C. 25% must be transferred to the Land for Maine's Future Trust Fund established in section 6203-D.

Sec. UUU-3. 5 MRSA, §1532, sub-§5, as amended by PL 2023, c. 643, Pt. F, §2, is repealed.

Sec. UUU-4. 5 MRSA, §1532, sub-§5-A is enacted to read:

5-A. Investment proceeds; exception. At the close of every month during which the stabilization fund is at the 18% limitation described in subsection 1, the State Controller shall transfer investment proceeds as follows.

A. 75% of the investment earnings must be transferred to the Irrevocable Trust Fund for Other Post-employment Benefits established in section 286-B, subsection 2 for the state employee plan, as defined in section 286-B, subsection 1, paragraph D; and

B. 25% of the investment earnings must be transferred to the Land for Maine's Future Trust Fund established in section 6203-D.

PART UUU SUMMARY

This Part adjusts how the Budget Stabilization Fund interest earnings are distributed when the Fund is below its statutory limitation of 18 percent. This Part also adjusts how the Budget Stabilization Fund interest earnings are distributed when the Fund is at its statutory limitation of 18 percent.