

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Amend Certain Laws Affecting Transportation

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

Sec. 1. 23 MRSA §52, first ¶, as repealed and replaced by PL 2005, c. 313, §2, is amended to read:

The Department of Transportation, referred to in this chapter as "the department," may from time to time make and shall enforce rules and regulations relating to the planning, design, engineering, construction, improvement, maintenance and use of transportation infrastructure. The department may from time to time make and shall enforce rules relating to the manner of conducting all investigations and hearings and the administration of its office, powers and duties. The department shall direct the expenditure of all money for the planning, design, engineering, construction, improvement, demolition, maintenance and use of all transportation infrastructure for which state funds are provided by law. The department may conduct traffic survey interviews and other statistical studies on the state highway system as considered necessary for the use in planning and development of the statewide highway system. The department may obtain leases for such land and office space as the department considers necessary for the performance of its duties. As used in this section, "transportation infrastructure" means infrastructure related to all modes of transportation, including highways, bridges, railroads, ferries, mass transit, airports and bicycle and pedestrian facilities, as well as all buildings, utilities, facilities and other appurtenances related to such modes.

Sec. 2. 23 MRSA §705, first ¶, as amended by PL 1999, c. 473, Pt. C, §2, is further amended to read:

The Department of Transportation is responsible for administering the placement of culverts within the right-of-way on improved state and state aid highways lying outside the compact area of an urban compact municipality as defined in section 754. When an abutter wants an entrance to be constructed on these highways, the abutter shall petition the department for a permit as provided under section 704. Should a permit be issued and a culvert is required, the abutter shall provide and install, at the abutter's expense, under the direction of the department, a culvert satisfactory to the department, which the department shall ~~install and~~ maintain.

Sec. 3. 23 MRSA §753-A, sub-§3, as enacted by PL 2001, c. 140, §1, is amended to read:

3. Prequalification. The department may require that firms be prequalified to submit proposals. If the department requires prequalification, it shall give public notice requesting qualifications from interested firms ~~in at least 2 newspapers distributed in the State~~electronically through the department's publicly accessible website or through advertisements in newspapers. If such a request is published exclusively in newspapers, the notice must appear in 2 or more public newspapers circulated wholly or in part in the State and in one public newspaper circulated wholly or in part in the county where the proposed work is to be done if any such newspaper is circulated in that county. The department shall issue a request-for-qualifications package to all firms requesting one in accordance with the notice.

Interested firms shall supply, for themselves and all major participants, all information required by the department. The department may investigate and verify all information received. All financial information, trade secrets or other information customarily regarded as confidential business information submitted to the department is confidential.

The department shall evaluate and rate all firms submitting a conforming statement of qualifications and select the most qualified firms to each receive a request for proposals. The department may select any number of firms, except that, if the department fails to prequalify at least 2 firms, the department shall readvertise the project.

Sec. 4. 23 MRSA §4210-A, sub-§1, as enacted by PL 2005, c. 282, §1, is amended to read:

1. Reimbursement. The department, in the course of delivering the federal surface transportation program, 23 United States Code, Section 133 (2005) may reimburse a National Register Historic District or the community in which the National Register Historic District is located for the portion of the cost to move or relocate overhead utilities underground to the extent that such payments by the department are eligible for reimbursement under the federal surface transportation program pursuant to 23 United States Code, Section ~~133~~133(b)(8) (2005). To be eligible for this reimbursement, the project must be located in a National Register Historic District and on the National Highway System and may not increase the department's cost or liability in complying with the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 United States Code, Sections 470 to 470x-6 (2005) or with 49 United States Code, Section 303 (2005). For the purposes of this section, "National Register Historic District" means a district that is individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, 16 United States Code, Sections 470 to 470x-6 (2005).

The amount paid in any biennium under this section may not exceed federal surface transportation program funds available under 23 United States Code, Section ~~133~~133(b)(8) (2005) to reimburse the State in that biennium.

Sec. 5. 29-A MRSA §101, sub-§21-A is enacted to read:

21-A. Drive-away saddlemount with fullmount vehicle transporter combination. "Drive-away saddlemount with fullmount vehicle transporter combination" means a vehicle combination designed and specifically used to tow up to 3 trucks or truck tractors, each connected by a saddle to the frame or 5th wheel of the vehicle in front of it. The saddle is a mechanism that connects the front axle of the towed vehicle to the frame or 5th wheel of the vehicle in front of it. The fullmount consists of a smaller vehicle mounted completely on the frame of either the first or the last vehicle in the drive-away saddlemount with fullmount vehicle transporter combination.

Sec. 6. 29-A MRSA §101, sub-§64, as enacted by PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 and affected by Pt. B, §5, is repealed.

Sec. 7. 29-A MRSA §2387, as enacted by PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 and affected by Pt. B, §5, is repealed.

Sec. 8. 29-A MRSA §2388, sub-§3, as amended by PL 1995, c. 65, Pt. A, §112 and affected by §153 and Pt. C, §15, is further amended to read:

3. Appeals. An appeal in writing may be taken to the Department of Transportation from an order or decision of a municipal official under sections 2380 to 2382, ~~2387~~ and 2395.

The Department of Transportation may hear and decide the matter in a summary manner, modifying, affirming or vacating the action and may issue any order necessary to carry out its decision.

An appeal does not suspend the order or decision of the municipal official unless ordered by the Department of Transportation.

~~An appeal may be taken to the Public Utilities Commission from an action by a railroad corporation under section 2387 in respect to a highway bridge maintained by the corporation. The commission, after notice and hearing, may confirm or modify that action.~~

Sec. 9. 29-A MRSA §2390, sub-§1, ¶I, as enacted by PL 1993, c. 683, Pt. A, §2 and affected by Pt. B, §5, is amended to read:

I. ~~Saddlemount~~Drive-away saddlemount with fullmount vehicle transporter combinations ~~with up to 3 saddlemounted vehicles and one fullmount,~~ with an overall length not exceeding ~~7597~~ feet; may be operated on the Interstate Highway System and those qualifying federal aid primary system highways designated by the Secretary of the United States Department of Transportation; pursuant to the United States Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982, Public Law 97-424, Section 411.

Sec. 10. 29-A MRSA §2602, sub-§4, ¶B, as amended by PL 2003, c. 498, §6 and affected by §12, is further amended to read:

B. Of the fines and forfeitures collected for traffic infractions under sections 511, 2354, 2356, 2360, 2380, ~~2387~~ and 2388, 7% accrues to the General Fund, 6% accrues to the Law Enforcement Agency Reimbursement Fund and the balance accrues to the General Highway Fund; and

Sec. 11. 29-A MRSA §2602, sub-§4, ¶C, as amended by PL 2003, c. 498, §6 and affected by §12, is further amended to read:

C. Of the fines and forfeitures collected for violations other than traffic infractions under sections 511, 2354, 2356, 2360, 2380, ~~2387~~ and 2388, only \$5 or 13%, whichever is greater, accrues to the General Fund and the balance accrues to the Highway Fund.

Sec. 12. 36 MRSA §3321, sub-§4, as enacted by PL 2001, c. 688, §8, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

4. Legislative review. Starting in 2008 and each even-numbered year thereafter, the Department of Transportation shall submit an emergency bill by the cloture date established for departments and agencies for the first regular session of the Legislature that suspends the adjustment in fuel tax rates in the upcoming biennium resulting from the operation of this section.

Sec. 13. P&SL 1937, c. 18, as amended by P&SL 1985, c. 38, is repealed.

SUMMARY

This bill makes the following changes to the laws governing transportation.

1. It expands the powers of the Department of Transportation to conduct traffic survey interviews and other statistical studies on the state highway system as considered necessary for the use in planning and development of the statewide highway system.

2. It requires the abutter of a property to install a culvert, at the direction of the department, when constructing an entrance from a state-owned highway.

3. It revises language relating to design-build projects to provide consistent language regarding electronic advertising.

4. It revises the definition and overall length limit of vehicle transporters traveling on the Interstate Highway System and certain primary roads in accordance with changes in federal law.

5. It also clarifies the intent of the Legislature in requiring the Department of Transportation to submit a bill every 2 years to the Legislature that suspends the indexing of the motor fuel tax for the succeeding biennium.

6. It provides more specific cross-references to federal laws governing the surface transportation program as they relate to reimbursement for the cost of relocating or burying overhead utilities in historic districts.

7. It repeals certain laws that provide authority for limiting the weight, number or speed of vehicles permitted on a bridge and fixes cross-references.

8. It repeals the laws that establish the Maine-New Hampshire Interstate Bridge Authority.