

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 Promote Municipal Energy Conservation

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

Sec. 1. 30-A MRS §5953-F is enacted to read:

§ 5953-F. Grants for municipal energy savings evaluations

1. Municipal Energy Savings Evaluation Fund. The bank shall establish a fund called the Municipal Energy Savings Evaluation Fund, referred to in this section as “the fund.” The purpose of the fund is to provide financial assistance to municipalities to identify cost-effective improvements to achieve energy savings. The fund consists of sums that are appropriated by the Legislature for the purpose of this section, interest earned from the investment of fund balances and any other funds from any public or private source that are received by the bank for use for the purpose of this section. The bank shall make grants from the fund in accordance with this section to no fewer than 5 municipalities and no more than 10 municipalities annually. The value of a grant to a municipality may not exceed \$40,000.

2. Municipal energy savings evaluation grants. A municipality may apply for a grant from the fund, the proceeds of which must be used by the municipality to identify cost-effective energy conservation measures and improvements to municipal buildings and municipal vehicle fleets to achieve energy savings. The bank may prescribe an application form or procedure for a municipality to apply for a grant under this section. The application must include all information necessary for the purpose of implementing this section. A municipality may apply for a grant from the fund regardless of whether the municipality intends to obtain or subsequently obtains a loan pursuant to section 5953-D to finance energy efficiency improvements in municipal buildings. The bank shall develop criteria and conditions for the awarding of grants to municipalities from the fund after consultation with the Public Utilities Commission and the Executive Department, State Planning Office.

3. Municipal building audit requirements. In the case of municipal buildings, cost-effective energy conservation measures and improvements to achieve energy savings identified under a grant provided from the fund must be identified through a comprehensive energy audit performed by a professional engineer licensed in this State. The audit must address compliance with the current version of ASHRAE Standard 62, Ventilation for Acceptable Indoor Air Quality, developed by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers, Inc. Cost-effective improvements to municipal buildings may include, but are not limited to, improvements to heating and cooling systems, windows, insulation, lighting and equipment.

4. Report to the Legislature. The bank shall report on the fund program to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over utilities and energy matters no later than January 1st of each odd-numbered year. The bank may make any recommendations it finds necessary to achieve the purposes of this section more effectively, including the appropriation of any necessary additional funds.

SUMMARY

This bill establishes funding to provide grants to municipalities to identify cost-effective energy conservation measures and improvements to municipal buildings and municipal vehicle fleets to achieve energy savings. The bill provides for grants of up to \$40,000 for 5 to 10 municipalities annually. The bill directs the Maine Municipal Bond Bank to administer the grants and directs the bank to develop criteria for the grants in consultation with the Public Utilities Commission and the Executive Department, State Planning Office. The bill requires that conservation measures and improvements in municipal buildings identified with grant funds be identified through a comprehensive energy audit performed by a licensed professional engineer. The bill requires the bank to report on the program every 2 years to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over utilities and energy matters.