



130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

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Legislative Document

No. 593

H.P. 436

House of Representatives, February 24, 2021

An Act To Restore Regular Eelgrass Mapping in the State

Received by the Clerk of the House on February 22, 2021. Referred to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative McCREIGHT of Harpswell.
Cosponsored by Representatives: O'CONNOR of Berwick, TUCKER of Brunswick, ZEIGLER of Montville, Senators: CARNEY of Cumberland, MAXMIN of Lincoln, VITELLI of Sagadahoc.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 38 MRSA §1805** is enacted to read:

3 **§1805. Eelgrass mapping**

4 In accordance with the requirements of this section and in consultation with the
5 Department of Marine Resources, the department shall establish and administer an eelgrass
6 mapping program. For the purposes of this section, "eelgrass" means the flowering marine
7 plant species *Zostera marina* that is primarily found in shallow, protected intertidal and
8 subtidal locations in the State.

9 **1. Mapping procedures.** The department shall in accordance with the schedule in
10 subsection 3 facilitate the production and update of eelgrass distribution maps for eelgrass
11 beds within the State. The data collected and the maps produced and updated in accordance
12 with this section must, to the maximum extent practicable, be compatible with the State's
13 geographic information system.

14 **2. Eelgrass Mapping Fund.** The Eelgrass Mapping Fund is created within the
15 department as a nonlapsing dedicated fund to support the establishment and administration
16 of the eelgrass mapping program required under this section. The fund may accept revenue
17 from grants, bequests, gifts or contributions from any source, public or private.

18 **3. Mapping schedule.** The mapping of eelgrass beds required under this section must
19 be conducted in accordance with the following schedule, as department resources allow.

20 A. No later than November 1, 2022, mapping must be completed for that portion of
21 the coast from Phippsburg to St. George and must be updated every 5 years thereafter.

22 B. No later than November 1, 2023, mapping must be completed for that portion of
23 the coast from St. George to Brooklin and must be updated every 5 years thereafter.

24 C. No later than November 1, 2024, mapping must be completed for that portion of
25 the coast from Brooklin to Jonesport and must be updated every 5 years thereafter.

26 D. No later than November 1, 2025, mapping must be completed for that portion of
27 the coast from Jonesport to Calais and must be updated every 5 years thereafter.

28 E. No later than November 1, 2026, mapping must be completed for that portion of
29 the coast from Eliot to Phippsburg and must be updated every 5 years thereafter.

30 **4. Availability of data and maps.** The department shall make available on its publicly
31 accessible website the data collected and maps produced and updated under this section.

32 **5. Report.** On or before March 1, 2023, and biennially thereafter, the department shall
33 submit to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over
34 environmental and natural resources matters a report summarizing the data collected and
35 maps produced and updated under this section and including an analysis, if available, of
36 the changes to the eelgrass beds within the State that are demonstrated by the data collected
37 and maps produced under this section.

38 **Sec. 2. Appropriations and allocations.** The following appropriations and
39 allocations are made.

40 **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, DEPARTMENT OF**
41 **Eelgrass Mapping Fund N302**

1 Initiative: Provides an allocation to accept grants, bequests, gifts or contributions from any
 2 source, public or private, to support the administration of the eelgrass mapping program.

3	OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	2021-22	2022-23
4	All Other	\$500	\$500
5			
6	OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS TOTAL	<u>\$500</u>	<u>\$500</u>

7 **Water Quality 0248**

8 Initiative: Provides appropriations for one Biologist II position and one Environmental
 9 Technician position and All Other costs.

10	GENERAL FUND	2021-22	2022-23
11	POSITIONS - LEGISLATIVE COUNT	2.000	2.000
12	Personal Services	\$191,551	\$195,382
13	All Other	\$6,292	\$6,418
14			
15	GENERAL FUND TOTAL	<u>\$197,843</u>	<u>\$201,800</u>

16 **Water Quality 0248**

17 Initiative: Provides appropriations for aerial imagery acquisition and processing and annual
 18 equipment maintenance and replacement.

19	GENERAL FUND	2021-22	2022-23
20	All Other	\$85,900	\$128,600
21			
22	GENERAL FUND TOTAL	<u>\$85,900</u>	<u>\$128,600</u>

23

24 **ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION,**
 25 **DEPARTMENT OF**
 26 **DEPARTMENT TOTALS**

27		2021-22	2022-23
28	GENERAL FUND	\$283,743	\$330,400
29	OTHER SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	\$500	\$500
30			
31	DEPARTMENT TOTAL - ALL FUNDS	<u>\$284,243</u>	<u>\$330,900</u>

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33 **SUMMARY**

34 This bill directs the Department of Environmental Protection, in consultation with the
 35 Department of Marine Resources, to establish and administer a program to regularly
 36 produce and update maps regarding the distribution of eelgrass beds in the State. Data
 37 collected and maps produced under this program must be made available on the Department

1 of Environmental Protection's publicly accessible website. The Department of
2 Environmental Protection is directed to submit to the joint standing committee of the
3 Legislature having jurisdiction over environmental and natural resources matters on or
4 before March 1, 2023, and biennially thereafter, a report on the data collected and maps
5 produced and updated under this program.

6 It also creates the Eelgrass Mapping Fund to support the establishment and
7 administration of the eelgrass mapping program and authorizes the fund to accept grants,
8 bequests, gifts or contributions from any source, public or private.

9 The intent of the mapping of eelgrass and other coastal resources as provided in this
10 bill is to align with the climate action plan released by the Maine Climate Council in
11 December 2020.