

§6401. Water Resources Planning Committee

1. Water Resources Planning Committee. The Water Resources Planning Committee, as established in section 12004-I, subsection 68-C and referred to in this subsection as "the committee," is established in the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.

A. The committee's membership must include, at a minimum:

(1) Personnel from:

- (a) The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Bureau of Resource Information and Land Use Planning, Division of Geology, Natural Areas and Coastal Resources, Maine Geological Survey;
- (b) The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Maine Agricultural Water Management Board;
- (c) The Public Utilities Commission;
- (d) The Department of Environmental Protection;
- (e) The Maine Land Use Planning Commission; and
- (f) The drinking water program of the Department of Health and Human Services; and

(2) Members of the public with expertise in:

- (a) Agriculture;
- (b) Public water utilities;
- (c) Water bottling and the sale of bottled water;
- (d) The use of water by private domestic well owners;
- (e) The environment and conservation;
- (f) The use of water by commercial entities;
- (g) Water conservation education; and
- (h) Stormwater management or wastewater management. [PL 2019, c. 67, §1 (NEW).]

B. The committee shall meet at least quarterly and report annually to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, beginning in August 2020. The committee shall plan for the sustainable use of water resources. The committee shall focus on:

- (1) Collecting and reviewing information regarding water withdrawal activities;
- (2) Coordinating state water resources information; and
- (3) Identifying watersheds at risk by refining the most recent analysis of watersheds at risk performed by the Bureau of Resource Information and Land Use Planning, Division of Geology, Natural Areas and Coastal Resources, Maine Geological Survey, including:
 - (a) Conducting appropriate water resources investigations in watersheds at risk;
 - (b) Considering projected increased water use by population, agricultural irrigation, commercial users, industrial users and other users;
 - (c) Considering seasonal use;
 - (d) Considering potential effects of climate change;
 - (e) Considering the effects of anticipated future water quality classification changes on the availability of water for withdrawal;

(f) In establishing priorities for further investigations, seeking input from the user community, from towns dealing with multimunicipal aquifers and from towns with significant local aquifers; and

(g) Developing guidelines for consistency in further investigations. [PL 2019, c. 67, §1 (NEW).]

C. The committee shall conduct annual reviews of state policy with regard to:

(1) Conservation of water resources;

(2) Development of regional sources and solutions to water use issues;

(3) Incentives for stewardship of water resources; and

(4) Effects of surface water quality improvements on water withdrawal opportunities. [PL 2019, c. 67, §1 (NEW).]

D. The committee shall provide guidance to municipalities and water districts and develop and disseminate educational materials on water resources and the regulatory regime. [PL 2019, c. 67, §1 (NEW).]

[PL 2019, c. 67, §1 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2019, c. 67, §1 (NEW).

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