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## **An Act To Promote Fairness and Protect Economic Development in Transportation Projects Undertaken by the State**

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

**Sec. 1. 23 MRSA §153-C** is enacted to read:

### **§ 153-C. Acquisition of property identified in transportation planning; new bypass highway project**

**1. Acquisition of property.** If the Department of Transportation prepares an environmental impact statement as required by the federal National Environmental Protection Act of 1969 for permitting for the location of a new bypass highway project and property will be affected by the limits of the final bypass right-of-way and the property owner submits a request in writing to the department that the department acquire that portion of the owner's property determined necessary for the new bypass highway project, the department shall acquire the property determined necessary if:

A. The department has received a least environmentally damaging practicable alternative determination from the United States Army Corps of Engineers that will be incorporated into the environmental impact statement for corridor alignment indicating that certain property will be necessary for the purposes set forth in section 153-B, subsection 1; and

B. The fair market value is determined in accordance with this subchapter.

The request submitted by the property owner under this subsection must be submitted to the department within 9 months of the date that the department receives the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative determination from the United States Army Corps of Engineers under paragraph A.

**2. Deadline for acquisition; extension.** The following provisions govern the deadline for acquisition of property by the Department of Transportation pursuant to subsection 1.

A. The department shall acquire affected properties pursuant to this subchapter within 2 years from the date of issuance of the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative determination from the United States Army Corps of Engineers under subsection 1, paragraph A.

B. Notwithstanding paragraph A, if funding for the new bypass highway project is not available or if state or federal regulations preclude the department from acquiring real property, the department may extend the time period for acquisition of affected properties up to 2 years. Any extension under this paragraph must be submitted no later than 90 days before the expiration of the 2 years under paragraph A to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over transportation matters for its review and comment.

**3. Reservation of eminent domain powers.** Nothing in this section affects or alters the rights of the Department of Transportation to exercise its rights of eminent domain under this Title.

Effective September 12, 2009