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Resolve, To Enhance Agriculture and Farming

Sec. 1 Department of Environmental Protection to review restrictions on bringing land into agricultural production. Resolved: That the Department of Environmental Protection, referred to in this resolve as "the department," shall review provisions in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 38, chapter 3, subchapter 1, articles 2#B and 5#A and rules authorized under those articles that affect a person's ability to clear or till land for agriculture. For the purposes of this resolve, "agriculture" means the production, keeping or maintenance for sale or lease of plants or animals, including but not limited to: forage and sod crops; grain and seed crops; dairy animals and dairy products; poultry and poultry products; livestock; fruits and vegetables; and ornamental and greenhouse products.

The department, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources, shall solicit input from farmers and representatives of agricultural associations when reviewing its rules. The department shall examine the setbacks in which tilling of soil is prohibited and consider options to allow land formerly used for forage crops and pasture to return to those uses; and be it further

Sec. 2 Report to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry. Resolved: That the department shall report to the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry no later than January 15, 2013 on its findings upon completion of the review under section 1 and recommendations for actions to increase land available for agricultural uses in an environmentally responsible manner; and be it further

Sec. 3 Appropriations and allocations. Resolved: That the following appropriations and allocations are made.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, DEPARTMENT OF

Land and Water Quality 0248

Initiative: Appropriates funds on a one-time basis for the Department of Environmental Protection to review statutes and rules including setbacks and forage and pasture regulations that restrict use of lands for agricultural purposes, to consult with the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources, to solicit data from farmers and agricultural associations and to report findings and recommendations to the Legislature no later than January 15, 2013.

GENERAL FUND	2011-12	2012-13
All Other	\$0	\$3,000
GENERAL FUND TOTAL	\$0	\$3,000

; and be it further

Sec. 4 Effective date. Resolved: That this resolve takes effect July 1, 2012.