

STATE OF MAINE

MEMORANDUM

O.F.P.R.
2009 AUG 28 PM 1:58

August 24, 2009

To: Sen. Bill Diamond, Senate Chair; Rep. Emily Ann Cain, House Chair; Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

From: Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Director, Maine Historic Preservation Commission *ESSJ*

Subject: The Initiative to Streamline State Government – Priority Programs

The Maine Historic Preservation Commission functions as the State Historic Preservation Office, and its Director is the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). The SHPO is responsible for administering the State Historic Preservation Program pursuant to Section 101(b)(3) of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, As Amended.

The state budget identifies the Maine Historic Preservation Commission as one program. In the current fiscal year, it is supported with a General Fund appropriation of \$316,795, and a Federal appropriation of \$650,393.

The Commission receives approximately two-thirds of its annual operating budget from the Historic Preservation Fund through the National Park Service. These funds must be matched on a 60% Federal – 40% State ratio, and failure to do so jeopardizes both the Federal grant and the ability to meet the minimum program requirements established in the Act. In order to maintain an approved State Historic Preservation Program and to continue to receive Federal funding, the SHPO is responsible for:

- Directing and conducting a comprehensive survey of historic and archaeological properties and maintaining inventories of such properties.
- Nominating eligible properties to the National Register of Historic Places.
- Preparing and implementing a Comprehensive Statewide Historic Preservation Plan.
- Administering the program of Federal grant assistance for historic preservation within the State.
- Advising and assisting Federal and State agencies and local governments in carrying out their historic preservation responsibilities.
- Cooperating with the Secretary of the Interior, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and other Federal, State, and local governments, organizations, and individuals to ensure that historic properties are taken into consideration at all levels of planning and development. Known as the Section 106 process, these reviews average 3,000 per year and are required for state agencies, municipal governments, and non-profit organizations to receive many categories of Federal assistance.
- Providing public information, education, training, and technical assistance relating to historic preservation.

- Cooperating with local governments in the development of local historic preservation programs, and certifying these programs, pursuant to the Act and related regulations.
- Consulting with the appropriate Federal agencies in accordance with the Act on: Federal undertakings that may affect historic properties, and the content and sufficiency of any plans developed to protect, manage, or to reduce or mitigate harm to such properties.
- Providing advice and assistance in the evaluation of proposals for rehabilitation projects that may qualify for Federal assistance (e.g., preservation tax incentives).

The staff and operation of the Commission exists solely to carry out Maine's State Historic Preservation Program through the activities noted above. As set forth in federal law and regulations, each of these activities can be considered "mission critical" to the core mission of the agency, and to maintaining the approved status of the State Historic Preservation Program. Although the level of staff effort needed to address individual activities varies, the SHPO cannot choose to disregard or eliminate any one of them from the State Historic Preservation Program. The agency has no other programs.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you or members of the Committee have any questions about the function and activities of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission.