



130th MAINE LEGISLATURE

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Legislative Document

No. 1601

H.P. 1190

House of Representatives, April 27, 2021

**Resolve, To Establish an Advisory Panel To Study the Implications
of Genome-editing Technology for the Citizens of the State**

Reference to the Committee on Health and Human Services suggested and ordered printed.

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

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative ZAGER of Portland.
Cosponsored by Senator CLAXTON of Androscoggin and
Representatives: BROOKS of Lewiston, EVANS of Dover-Foxcroft, HYMANSON of York,
NEWELL of the Passamaquoddy Tribe, PERRY of Calais, Senator: BRENNER of
Cumberland.

1 **Preamble. Whereas,** genome-editing technologies, such as clustered regularly
2 interspaced short palindromic repeats, also known as CRISPR-Cas9, and gene drive, have
3 been discovered and dramatically refined in recent years, enabling innumerable
4 opportunities around the world to inexpensively edit the genetic code of any living thing;
5 and

6 **Whereas,** many deadly human diseases could be eradicated with genome-editing
7 technology, thereby saving countless lives, immeasurable heartache and large health care
8 expenditures in perpetuity; and

9 **Whereas,** a genetic alteration in a species of marine, terrestrial or airborne animal,
10 plant, fungus, protozoan, bacteria or virus could rapidly alter the natural beauty, ecology,
11 security and economy of Maine; and

12 **Whereas,** Maine's higher education system and technology sector can further position
13 themselves as leaders in innovation and ethical implementation, reaping enduring benefits
14 for Maine citizens, through the use of these technologies; and

15 **Whereas,** there are significant ethical, social and legal considerations for genome
16 editing in humans and other species; and

17 **Whereas,** in the past, scientific ideas have been used in the implementation of and to
18 promote eugenics programs and other forms of oppression; and

19 **Whereas,** throughout history, living organisms have been used as weapons and
20 genome-editing technologies create new security needs in the endless effort to protect the
21 people of Maine and the United States; and

22 **Whereas,** genome editing has the potential to fundamentally improve or diminish our
23 health, our natural environment, our social fabric and our economy; and

24 **Whereas,** the pace of innovation is accelerating and over the next several years Maine
25 can capitalize on the changes in our world that genome editing can bring about or risk being
26 left behind; now, therefore, be it

27 **Sec. 1. Panel established. Resolved:** That the Advisory Panel To Study the
28 Implications of Genome-editing Technology for the Citizens of the State, referred to in this
29 resolve as "the panel," is established.

30 **Sec. 2. Panel membership. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the
31 panel consists of 17 members appointed as follows:

32 1. Three members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate, including
33 members from each of the 2 parties holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature.
34 In making the appointments pursuant to this subsection, the President of the Senate shall
35 endeavor to appoint members having expertise in areas or backgrounds described under
36 section 5;

37 2. Six members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the
38 House, including members from each of the 2 parties holding the largest number of seats
39 in the Legislature. In making the appointments pursuant to this subsection, the Speaker of
40 the House shall endeavor to appoint members having expertise in areas or backgrounds
41 described under section 5;

- 1 3. One member who is a bioethicist, appointed by the President of the Senate;
- 2 4. One member who is a person under 30 years of age at the time of the appointment,
- 3 appointed by the Speaker of the House;
- 4 5. One member who is of the Wabanaki people, appointed by the President of the
- 5 Senate;
- 6 6. One member who is a fiction author or poet whose published works have explored
- 7 the humanity of all people, appointed by the Speaker of the House;
- 8 7. One member who is a person living with a single-gene disorder, such as cystic
- 9 fibrosis, Duchenne muscular dystrophy or sickle-cell anemia, appointed by the President
- 10 of the Senate;
- 11 8. One member having expertise in an area or a background described under section
- 12 5, appointed by the President of the Senate; and
- 13 9. Two members having expertise in areas or backgrounds described under section 5,
- 14 appointed by the Speaker of the House.

15 The Presiding Officers shall invite the participation on the panel of the Chief Justice of
16 the Supreme Judicial Court or the chief justice's designee and the Governor or the
17 Governor's designee.

18 **Sec. 3. Chairs. Resolved:** That the first-named Senate member is the Senate chair
19 and the first-named House of Representatives member is the House chair of the panel.

20 **Sec. 4. Appointments; convening of panel. Resolved:** That all appointments
21 must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this resolve. The
22 appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative Council once
23 all appointments have been completed. After appointment of all members, the chairs shall
24 call and convene the first meeting of the panel. If 30 days or more after the effective date
25 of this resolve a majority of but not all appointments have been made, the chairs may
26 request authority and the Legislative Council may grant authority for the panel to meet and
27 conduct its business.

28 **Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved:** That the panel shall study the implications of genome-
29 editing technology and the legislative, administrative or other steps that the State should
30 take to capitalize on the potential and avoid the hazards of genome-editing technology. In
31 performing its duties under this section, the panel shall solicit the testimony, advice or
32 participation of persons having the following backgrounds or areas of expertise:

- 33 1. Ethics;
- 34 2. Clinical medicine caring for children;
- 35 3. Clinical medicine caring for adults;
- 36 4. Public health;
- 37 5. Bioscience research;
- 38 6. Environmental protection;
- 39 7. Forestry;
- 40 8. Agriculture or aquaculture;

- 1 9. Fishing;
- 2 10. State economics;
- 3 11. Tourism, business or commerce;
- 4 12. Military or security affairs;
- 5 13. University of Maine System or Maine Community College System;
- 6 14. Living with a single-gene disorder, such as cystic fibrosis, Duchenne muscular
- 7 dystrophy or sickle-cell anemia, or a parent or guardian of a person living with such a
- 8 single-gene disorder;
- 9 15. Hospital or hospice chaplaincy; and
- 10 16. History of race, ethnicity or eugenics.

11 **Sec. 6. Staff assistance. Resolved:** That the Legislative Council shall provide
12 necessary staffing services to the panel, except that the Legislative Council staff support is
13 not authorized when the Legislature is in regular or special session.

14 **Sec. 7. Report. Resolved:** That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, no later than
15 December 31, 2022, the panel shall submit a report that includes its findings and
16 recommendations, including suggested legislation, for presentation to the First Regular
17 Session of the 131st Legislature.

18 SUMMARY

19 This resolve establishes the Advisory Panel To Study the Implications of Genome-
20 editing Technology for the Citizens of the State to study the implications of genome-editing
21 technology and the legislative, administrative or other steps that the State should take to
22 capitalize on the potential and avoid the hazards of genome-editing technology. The panel
23 is directed to submit its report, including suggested legislation, to the First Regular Session
24 of the 131st Legislature by December 31, 2022.