



PRESS RELEASE

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Maine House Gives Initial Approval to Advanced Clean Elections Funding Bill

The measure will ensure adequate funding for the 2016 legislative elections.

AUGUSTA – In an 81 – 65 vote, the Maine House of Representatives gave initial approval to LD 1579 today, a bill that will provide an additional \$500,000 in advanced funding to Maine’s Clean Election Fund.

“For years, lawmakers have been raiding the Clean Election Fund without living up to their promise of paying the money back. We would have liked to see Maine lawmakers pay back the \$1.7 million raided from the Clean Election Fund in 2015. However, we are pleased to see that Democrats, Republicans and independents in the House came together to provide advanced funding to Maine’s Clean Election Fund so the program will remain solvent for the 2016 election. We now hope for swift approval in Senate,” said Ann Luther, Maine Citizens for Clean Elections (MCCE) Action board member and the primary signer of November’s successful Clean Elections ballot initiative.

Without the advanced funding, Maine’s Clean Election Fund could run dry this election cycle because of years of legislative funding raids to the program. Since 1996, \$9.8 million has been raided from the Clean Elections Fund, with only \$3.1 million of that amount ever repaid. A net amount of more than \$6.0 million is owed to the fund. The most recent raid totaling \$1.7 million occurred in 2015, after the recent Clean Elections Initiative (also known as Question 1 on the 2015 ballot) was already on its way to the ballot.

Advocates have been urging lawmakers to pay back the \$1.7 million raided from the fund in 2015. In recent days, lawmakers instead struck a bipartisan compromise to advance \$500,000 of Clean Election funding appropriated for 2017 to ensure the fund does not run dry in the 2016 election cycle. This compromise does not require any additional spending.