MainePERS
PUBLIC EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM

LEGISLATIVE FACT SHEET

LD 317	**An Act to Create Equality in Retirement for Forest Rangers with that of Employees of State Conservation Law Enforcement Agencies**
Description	This bill would change the retirement plan by which forest rangers are covered to a plan that permits retirement after twenty-five (25) years of service as a forest ranger.
Impact	This would impact certain forest rangers employed by the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry
Costs	The bill would increase pension costs in two ways. First, it would create an actuarial liability, which would have to be funded up front under the State Constitution. Second, it would increase the normal costs that are paid by the State. These costs have not yet been determined.
Reason for Costs	Under current law, forest rangers are in the 1998 Special Plan, which allows retirement with 10 years of service in the plan at age 55, or with 25 years of service in any position covered by the 1998 Special Plan at age 55. Benefits for those with a portion of their service earned under the regular plan who retire before normal retirement age are subject to a reduction for the early retirement based upon the plan in which service was earned. For most, this is a 6% per year reduction from the normal retirement age of 62 or 65 for service earned in the regular plan and a 6% per year reduction from age 55 for service earned in the special plan. The contributions that have been paid toward retirement for these members have been based on this structure. Under LD 317, forest rangers would be eligible to retire after completion of twenty-five years of service, regardless of age. Therefore, a reduction for early retirement would no longer apply. Since contributions for these members have been based on a less-expensive plan with an age-based requirement and a reduction for retirement prior to that age, the bill would create an actuarial liability that does not currently exist. The Maine Constitution requires that the cost of enhancing benefits must be fully paid at the time that the enhancement is made. As a result, the increased actuarial liability must be fully-funded up front.