

## Tax Committee Delivers Recommendations

On Tuesday this week, the members of the Tax Committee met with the Appropriations Committee to outline their recommendations on the many elements of the Governor’s proposed FY 2016–2017 budget that impact tax policy. A link to the report is accessible from MMA’s website (<http://goo.gl/o8osoK>).

Due to the efforts of municipal officials, both through participation in several budget-related hearings, as well as through discussions at the community level and meetings with legislators, the recommendations from the Tax Committee take into consideration municipal interests and the interests of Maine’s residential property taxpayers. The Tax Committee’s recommendations preserve the revenue sharing program at current funding levels, despite the Governor’s proposal to repeal the program in FY 2017, shifts taxing authority over two-way telecommunications property from the state to municipalities, and ensures that all Maine resident property taxpayers will continue to benefit from the Homestead Exemption program.

Municipal officials are appreciative of the Tax Committee members’ efforts.

What follows is a description of the Tax Committee’s recommendations.

- **Revenue Sharing.** As proposed, revenue sharing would be funded at \$62.5 million in FY 2016 and repealed in FY 2017 and subsequent years. *The Tax Committee unanimously recommended to fund the revenue sharing program at \$62.5 million in both FY 2016 and FY 2017 and to leave funding level discussions in FY 2018 and subsequent years to future Legislatures.*

- **Homestead Exemption.** As proposed, the value of the Homestead Exemption would be doubled from \$10,000 to \$20,000 but made available only to Maine

residents 65 years old and over. All other homesteaders would no longer be eligible for an exemption. *The Tax Committee opposed the proposal by a margin of 12-0.*

- **BETR/BETE Conversion.** As proposed, the taxable property enrolled in the Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement (BETR) program would be transferred to the Business Equipment Tax Exemption (BETE) program over a four-year period. *The Tax Committee voted to support this initiative by a margin of 7-6. The minority recommendation proposes to close off new enrollments in the BETR program starting April 1, 2015 and to otherwise allow the BETR program to expire by natural attrition.*

- **Telecommunications Personal Property.** As proposed, the taxing authority over two-way telecommunications personal property (e.g., telephone cables, broadband infrastructure, equipment attached to cellular towers, etc.) would be shifted from the state to the municipalities. *The Tax Committee voted to support this initiative by a margin of 10-0.*

- **Limited Property Tax Exemption.** As proposed, 50% of the assessed property over \$500,000 in value owned by certain tax exempt organizations would become taxable. *The Tax Committee voted to oppose this initiative by a margin of 10-0.*

- **Tree Growth Tax Law Changes.** As proposed, the Tree Growth Tax program would be amended in several ways, including: (1) requiring landowners to actually have in their possession the forest management plan they are required to have prepared and maintained for them under the Tree Growth Tax law; (2) requiring the forest management plans to include more precise information about the owner’s commercial timber harvesting activities; (3) authorizing the Bureau of Forestry to continue its program of random audits of the land enrolled under the program to ensure compliance with the law and the forest management plans; and (4) beefing up the penalty elements of the program, affecting both municipalities and enrollees. *The Tax Committee voted to oppose this initiative by a margin of 11-1.*

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## Committees Simultaneously Reject Proposals Dealing with Nonprofits’ Contributions to Local Budgets

A key plank in the 2015 platform advanced by MMA’s Legislative Policy Committee this session, LD 724, *An Act To Authorize Municipal Fire Districts To Impose Service Charges*, and a related legislative proposal, LD 565, *An Act To Authorize Municipalities To Impose Service Charges on Tax-exempt Property Owned by Certain Nonprofit Organizations*, both met an untimely death on Wednesday this week at the hands of their respective legislative committees of jurisdiction.

The Taxation Committee and the State and Local Government Committee each rejected bills that would have, in different ways, expanded local governments’ authority to obtain some financial support from high-value tax exempt corporations for the local government services they directly receive.

When LD 565 was heard by the Taxation Committee, the lobbyists representing the nonprofit corporations who opposed the breadth of that approach referenced

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• **Sales Tax Rate Changes.** For each sales category, the table provided below shows the current sales tax rate, the sales tax rates proposed under the Governor’s budget, and the sales tax rate changes proposed by the Tax Committee. *Unless otherwise noted, the Committee unanimously supported the recommended rate changes.*

*management services; and (5) personal property services.*

• **Service Provider Tax.** Under existing law a service provider tax of 5% is assessed against several services, including extended cable and satellite television; rental of video and audio media and equipment; and telecommunications equipment installation, maintenance and

2016 and FY 2017 to 6.95% and to 5.75% in FY 2018 and FY 2019.

• **Income Tax Deductions - Pensions.** As proposed, 100% of military retirement pensions would be exempt from the income tax beginning in FY 2016. The pension deductions for all other retirement plans would incrementally increase from the current \$10,000 to \$35,000 in FY 2020 and subsequent years. *The Tax Committee voted to support exempting 100% of military retirement pension benefits by a margin of 13-0. The Tax Committee was evenly split on the non-military benefit proposal, with 6 members voting to support the proposal and 6 members voting in opposition.*

• **Income Tax Deductions – Long-term Care & College Savings.** As proposed, the income tax deductions for long-term care insurance premiums and contributions to college savings programs would be repealed. *The Tax Committee voted to support both proposals by a margin of 13-0.*

• **Income Tax – Itemized Deductions.** Under current law, Maine income tax filers are permitted to deduct federal itemized deductions up to a maximum of \$27,500 from their state income tax obligations. As proposed, this deduction would be repealed beginning with tax year 2016. *Six members of the Tax Committee recommended supporting the proposal. Six members recommended retaining itemized deductions but lowering the current cap from \$27,500 to \$15,000.*

• **Income Tax Credit – Sales Tax Fairness (STFC).** As proposed, a new sales tax fairness credit would be created to provide Maine residents relief from the initiatives to both expand the existing taxable sales base and increase the tax rates. Under the STFC, the value of the credit would phase out as income increases and provide a credit valued up to \$500 for single filers making between \$15,000 and \$27,000, heads of households making between \$22,500 and \$47,250 and joint filers earning between \$30,000 and \$54,000. *The Tax Committee voted to support the proposal by a margin of 13-0.*

• **Income Tax Credit - Property Tax Fairness (PTFC).** As proposed, the benefits provided under the PTFC would

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### Sales Tax Rate Changes

|                        | Current Rate | Governor’s Proposed Rate | Tax Committee Recommendation           |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------------------|--|
| Short Term Auto Rental | 10%          | 8%                       | 10%                                    |
| Lodging                | 8%           | 8%                       | 9%                                     |
| Meals                  | 8%           | 6.50%                    | 8%                                     |
| General Sales          | 5.50%        | 6.50%                    | 5.50% (7 Members)<br>6.50% (5 Members) |

• **Taxable Sales Base Expansion.** As proposed, the sales tax base would be expanded to include: (1) recreation and amusement services; (2) installation, repair and maintenance services (except auto repair services); (3) personal services; (4) domestic and household services; (5) personal property services; and (6) professional services. *By a margin of 10-0, the Tax Committee recommended expanding the taxable sales base to include (1) recreation and amusement services; except museums; (2) installation, repair and maintenance services, except auto repair services; (3) personal services, except hair services; (4) domestic and household services, except private waste*

repair, to name a few. As proposed, the sales tax rate would increase to 6% and the list of taxable services expanded to include basic cable and satellite television services and interstate and international telecommunication services. *The Tax Committee voted to support this initiative by a margin of 10-1.*

• **Income Tax Rate Changes.** As proposed, the highest marginal income tax rate of 7.95% would be reduced to 5.75% over a four year period. *Six members of the Tax Committee recommended a rate and bracket structure that when compared to the sales tax base and rate change proposals is revenue neutral and provides income tax relief by (1) establishing 5 brackets, including a 0% bracket from \$0 to \$9,699; (2) providing a progressive rate structure; and (3) devising an income tax bracket structure that provides approximately the same dollar amount of tax reduction to each decile. One member also supported that approach, but further recommended providing greater income tax rate reductions through higher sales tax rates and limited itemized deductions. Five members recommended dropping the highest marginal income tax rate for FY*

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## Tax Committee (cont'd)

be increased by \$60 million annually. To provide the additional benefits, the maximum property tax that could be used in the calculation of the credit and the value of the credit provided to qualifying applicants would be increased. *The Tax Committee opposed this initiative by a margin of 7-6. The Committee members voting in opposition noted that the Governor's proposal would have eliminated approximately \$60 million a year in municipal revenue sharing and increased the property tax fairness credit by the same amount. Given that the Committee was unanimously rejecting the proposal to eliminate municipal revenue sharing, the resources to increase the property tax fairness credit were no longer available.*

- **Income Tax Credit – Earned Income Tax (EITC).** As proposed, the EITC would be repealed. *The Tax Committee voted to support the proposal by a margin of 10-2.*

- **Income Tax Credit – Miscellaneous.** As proposed, the income tax credits for family development accounts, child and dependent care, retirement and

disability, and forest management plans would be repealed. *The Tax Committee voted to support the proposal by a margin of 10-0.*

- **Income Tax Credit – Medical Expenses.** As proposed, the itemized deduction for medical expenses would be replaced with an income tax credit equal to 5% of the federal deduction for medical and dental expenses. *The Tax Committee's vote on the medical expenses tax credit proposal failed by a tie vote of 6-6.*

- **Income Tax Form Check-offs.** As proposed, with the exception of the Maine Clean Election Fund, all check-offs for contributions included on the income tax form would be removed. This would include the Nongame Wildlife Fund, Companion Animal Sterilization Fund, Children's Trust Incorporated, Maine Military Family Relief Fund, Maine Veterans' Memorial Cemetery Maintenance Fund and the Maine Public Library Fund. *The Tax Committee voted to oppose the proposal by a margin of 12-0.*

- **Corporate Income Tax Rate**

**Changes.** As proposed, the highest marginal corporate income tax rate of 8.93% would be reduced to 6.75% over a four year period. *The Tax Committee voted to support the proposal by a margin of 8-5.*

- **Corporate Alternative Minimum Tax.** Under existing law, corporations are required to pay a minimum tax equal to 5.4% of modified federal alternative minimum taxable income. As proposed, the tax would be repealed on January 1, 2016. *The Tax Committee voted to support the proposal by a margin of 7-6.*

- **Estate Tax Repeal.** As proposed, the estate tax would be repealed on January 1, 2017. *Six members of the Tax Committee voted to support the proposal. Four members voted to oppose the proposal. Two members recommended returning to the January 1, 2013 rate and bracket structure. One member recommended retaining the tax, but increasing from \$2 million to \$5.5 million the income exempted from the estate tax.*

## Nonprofits' Contribution (cont.)

the narrower "fire district" approach laid out in LD 724 as preferable. At the LD 724 hearing before the State and Local Government Committee, many of the same lobbyists testified "neither for nor against" the bill rather than in opposition due to its limited, targeted, predictable and equitable design. LD 724 simply authorizes municipalities to create fire utility districts that could substitute property taxes for a fee for fire protection services to be assessed equally on the basis of a building's square footage.

LD 565, the service fee bill, advances a more comprehensive approach whereby municipalities would be authorized to assess service fees against high-end tax exempt corporations to reflect a broader array of public services they directly receive than just fire protection services. The contrast in approach didn't matter. The members of the two separate legislative committees, Taxation with respect to LD 565 and the State and Local Government Committee with respect to LD 724, voted

almost unanimously to kill both bills, with each legislative committee suggesting the other committee was in possession of the more promising approach.

The Tax Committee voted 8-0 to oppose LD 565. The sponsor's apparent lack of interest was one reason cited, and Committee members discussed the testimony provided by the nonprofits suggesting the LD 724 fire district bill was a better alternative. A few comments were offered regarding the need to explore this issue, but that sentiment did not get very far. Committee members seemed to think that another legislative vehicle, be it LD 724 or the budget or some other measure, would lead to a discussion of the merits of service charges on the House and Senate floors.

Because these work sessions occurred simultaneously during this session's final MMA Legislative Policy Committee meeting, Lewiston City Administrator Ed Barrett attended the LD 724 work session and responded to the Committee members' many inquiries with precision

and clarity. The members seemed to have come to the work session loaded with a fair degree of skepticism, asking pointed questions that included concerns about the public schools' ability to pay their fire service fee to whether this bill is a clever way for municipalities to "double-dip" by imposing both taxes on some property owners and fees on others. The reception was cool and Committee members seemed to find the straightforward public policy proposal to utilize fees for service in lieu of property taxes difficult to appreciate.

At nearly the exact same time of day, each Committee offered the justification that the other Committee would be likely to support the alternative legislative approach and therefore rejected the approach that was in their hands. It was either highly choreographed or a case of one hand actually not knowing what the other hand was doing when both LD 565 and 724 got voted down. Either bill would have offered a reasonable lifeline to struggling municipalities.

## Modernizing the Highway Fund in an Era of Fuel Efficiency

A chart in this article documents a Highway Fund in a state of structural stagnation. Members of MMA’s Legislative Policy Committee strongly believe the stagnation of the state’s Highway Fund needs to be addressed. Accordingly, the LPC’s 2015 Policy Platform included the transportation investment bill LD901, *An Act To Ensure Sustainable Infrastructure Funding*.

The Highway Fund is capitalized largely by motor fuel taxes and its stagnation is occurring as a direct result of the increased fuel efficiency of motor vehicles. Improved fuel efficiency allows vehicles to travel further on less fuel, leading to a decrease in fuel tax collections that does not correspond with a decrease in travelling. In other words, the cost of maintaining infrastructure is going up while the revenues available for capital improvements and repairs are going down.

That the Highway Fund is inadequately capitalized because of emerging fuel efficiencies suggests a structural problem with the Fund’s funding system. A structural solution to the problem developed by MMA’s Policy Committee attempts to address the issue at its root cause.

LD901 incrementally adjusts through an indexing system Maine’s motor fuel excise tax rates according to increases in motor vehicle fuel efficiency standards established by the federal government. These benchmarks are established by the U.S. Department of Transportation and known as the Corporate Average Fuel Economy or “CAFE” standards. The link between federal fuel economy standards and decreasing state Highway Fund revenues associated with fuel usage is clear, and this bill would put that link into law.

The previous method of indexing utilized the Consumer Price Index (CPI), and was repealed by the Legislature in 2011. CPI can change in unpredictable way, up or down. In contrast, CAFE standards currently increase by about 1 index point annually. In actual numbers, enacting this legislation would result in a total fuel efficiency adjustment of 6.65 cents per gallon by the time this bill effectively sunsets in 2021, or by slightly more than a penny per gallon per year.

The bill’s sponsor, House Chair of the Transportation Committee Rep. An-

drew McLean (Gorham), emphasized in his testimony the need to adequately maintain the state’s highway and bridge infrastructure and the fiscal responsibility of the LD 901 approach. State Highway Fund revenues have declined for nearly a decade while the federal government, which for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century provided reliable infrastructure funding to the states, has not increased the fuel tax in twenty-two years. This has forced the various states – the “fifty laboratories of democracy” – to step up to the issue by identifying new revenue sources that ensure the sustainability of infrastructure funding. To Rep. McLean, tying Highway Fund revenue to CAFE standards strikes the right balance by continuing to encourage the reduction in the use of fossil fuels without reducing revenues.

LD 901 was also supported by the Maine Better Transportation Association, the Associated General Contractors of Maine, the Maine Service Center Coalition, and Old Orchard Beach Manager Larry Mead. Mead stressed the fairness of this approach and the fact that the travelled use of Maine’s many roads and bridges is not declining. The MBTA and AGC each took issue with the Legislature’s near dependence on bonding to fund transportation investments because bonding is unreliable, fiscally questionable, and insufficient. The gas tax was accurately characterized as a user-fee system, which like any other should be adjusted periodically to reflect the realities of the market. The Service Center Coalition agreed that Maine “cannot continue to bond our way out of this problem” and pledged to work with the Committee to achieve comprehensive and bi-partisan transportation funding reform in this biennium. As they described it, the problem is at a critical stage and cannot wait.

The Maine Department of Transportation, National Federation of Independent Businesses and Maine Motor Transport Association opposed LD 901, which has not yet been scheduled for a work session. MDOT has pledged to provide the Transportation Committee with a proposal to increase revenues, but acknowledged it may take a month before the proposal is brought forward.

| Highway Fund Revenue (1995-2015)            |               |          |
|---|---------------|----------|
|   | Total Revenue | % Change |
| 1995  | \$217,412,730 |          |
| 1996  | \$254,214,918 | 17%      |
| 1997  | \$220,942,617 | -13%     |
| 1998  | \$221,876,271 | 0%       |
| 1999  | \$244,163,962 | 10%      |
| 2000  | \$262,918,938 | 8%       |
| 2001  | \$273,117,902 | 4%       |
| 2002  | \$281,984,017 | 3%       |
| 2003  | \$288,246,084 | 2%       |
| 2004  | \$312,027,986 | 8%       |
| 2005  | \$326,078,155 | 5%       |
| 2006  | \$326,546,157 | 0%       |
| 2007  | \$330,821,083 | 1%       |
| 2008  | \$328,136,579 | -1%      |
| 2009  | \$324,242,149 | -1%      |
| 2010  | \$311,190,374 | -4%      |
| 2011  | \$311,351,155 | 0%       |
| 2012  | \$317,202,409 | 2%       |
| 2013  | \$318,825,700 | 1%       |
| 2014  | \$310,267,211 | -3%      |
| 2015  | \$308,576,740 | -1%      |
| Source: Office of Fiscal and Program Review |               |          |

# Some Municipal Ordinances Trumped by Constitutional Right to Hunt Proposal

Two very similar proposals that would amend the state's Constitution to create a person's right to hunt, fish and harvest wildlife, subject only to limitations established by the Legislature and its wildlife management agencies, were given their public hearing on Thursday this week before the Legislature's Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Committee.

The differences between LD 703, sponsored by Rep. Karl Ward (Dedham) and LD 753, sponsored by Rep. Steve Wood (Sabattus), are hardly noticeable. Both bills establish the hunting/fishing/harvesting rights of every citizen. Both bills place sole authority to limit those rights with the State Legislature and its wildlife management agencies. Both bills establish "public hunting" as the preferred means of managing and controlling wildlife. Both bills contain a clause to clarify which laws the established constitutional rights would not trump, which are laws related to trespass, property rights, or, in the case of LD 753, eminent domain.

On the basis of the public hearing, it is clear that the primary impetus behind amending the Constitution in this manner is to prohibit citizen initiatives that might amend the state's hunting laws. The public hearing essentially revisited the anger and frustration experienced by Maine's hunting interests with respect to the national Humane Society's efforts to ban certain

bear hunting practices in Maine through the citizen initiative process.

In addition to the two sponsors, nine proponents testified in support of the bills, including the Sportsman's Alliance of Maine, several registered Maine guides, the Professional Maine Guides Association and the Maine Trappers Association.

Four individuals and representatives of organizations testified in opposition to the two bills, including the representative of the national Humane Society and a couple of private citizens. Their arguments focused on the way the bills would prohibit the citizens' rights to petition for changes to state law with respect to just one area of public policy (hunting and fishing regulation). Their big question was which area of public policy would be next on the list of issues made "off limits" to the citizen initiative process. One opponent made the point that "non-consumptive" wildlife enthusiasts are afforded little political voice in the Legislature.

MMA also testified in opposition to LD 703 and LD 753, but with a different focus than the other opponents. The Association's 70-member Legislative Policy Committee voted to oppose these two bills because if ultimately approved by the voters as printed, the proposed constitutional amendments would likely impair the ability of any municipal legislative body to enact certain important and

commonly enacted ordinances perceived as indirectly interfering with the rights to hunt, fish and harvest wildlife.

Municipalities with built-up downtown centers and densely populated areas commonly adopt ordinances that restrict the discharge of firearms within designated zones. Would the constitutional rights proposed by this legislation override those local enactments?

If fishing or the harvesting of wildlife is interpreted to include the harvesting of shellfish and other similar wildlife products, how would the proposed constitutional amendment square with the shellfish conservation ordinances adopted and rigorously maintained by many coastal communities?

If "public hunting" is given constitutional preference by these proposals, would the municipal legislative body have the right to prohibit hunting within the confines of a publicly owned park or open lands owned by the public?

These represent a sampling of the concerns municipal officials have with establishing a broad constitutional right to engage in certain activities (e.g., hunting) and simultaneously removing authorities that currently exist at the municipal level to protect the public and locally-important resources.

## LEGISLATIVE HEARINGS

*Note: You should check your newspapers for Legal Notices as there may be changes in the hearing schedule. For the Legislative Events Calendar, see the Legislature's web site at <http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/calendar/>. If you wish to look up schedules by Committee, go to <http://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/bills/phwkSched.html>.*

### Monday, April 13

**Appropriations & Financial Affairs**  
**Room 228, State House, 9:30 a.m.**  
**Tel: 287-1316**

LD 1032 – An Act To Implement the Combination Defined Benefit and Defined Contribution Retirement Plan Described in a Report Submitted to the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs in March 2012.

**Criminal Justice & Public Safety**  
**Rm. 436, State House, 10:00 a.m.**  
**Tel: 287-1122**

LD 944 – An Act Regarding Recovery of Emergency Response Costs Related to an OUI Offence.

LD 988 – An Act To Create the Crime of Operating While Fatigued.

**1:00 p.m.**

LD 458 – An Act To Implement a Motor Vehicle Violation Electronic Citation Program.

LD 655 – Resolve, To Study the Feasibility of a State Firefighter Training Facility.

LD 658 – An Act To Allow Text Messaging for Reporting Emergencies.

LD 697 – An Act To Restore Public Safety Programs in the Department of Public Safety and the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation.

LD 748 – An Act To Provide for Tiered Qualifications for Volunteer Firefighters in Certain Municipalities.

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## LEGISLATIVE HEARINGS (cont.)

### Education & Cultural Affairs

**Room 202, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.**

**Tel: 287-3125**

LD 218 – An Act To Support Fair Financing in Charter Schools and School Administrative Units.

LD 306 – Resolve, To Prevent Overpayment for Virtual Education.

LD 696 – An Act to Establish a Moratorium on the Establishment of Virtual Charter Schools.

LD 1047 – An Act To Allow for Collaboration in Public Charter Schools.

LD 1250 – An Act To Reform Public Charter Schools.

### Health & Human Services

**Room 209, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.**

**Tel: 287-1317**

LD 1030 – An Act to Better Coordinate the Work of Mental Health Crisis Agencies with Law Enforcement Agencies.

### State & Local Government

**Room 214, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.**

**Tel: 287-1330**

LD 1008 – An Act To Extend Options for Publicly Funded Projects.

LD 1161 – Resolve, To Modify the Deed for a Parcel of Property in the Town of Carrabassett Valley.

### Taxation

**Room 127, State House, 1:00 p.m.**

**Tel: 287-1552**

LD 76 – An Act To Amend the Property Tax Fairness Credit.

LD 965 – RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Permit the Freezing of Property Taxes on the Homes of Maine Residents Who Are 65 Years of Age or Older.

LD 1095 – An Act To Enhance the Property Tax Fairness Credit for Maine's Low-income Seniors and Other Low-income Residents.

LD 1126 – An Act To Provide Property Tax Deferral for Senior Citizens and People with Disabilities.

### Veterans & Legal Affairs

**Room 437, State House, 10:00 a.m.**

**Tel: 287-1310**

LD 1127 – An Act Regarding the Authority of the Secretary of State and the Attorney General To Conduct Investigations of Vote Recounts.

LD 1138 – An Act Regarding Municipal Reporting of Statewide Elections.

LD 1111 – An Act to Provide Funding to Municipalities To Assist with the Maintenance of Veterans' Graves.

## Tuesday, April 14

### Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry

**Room 214, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.**

**Tel: 287-1312**

LD 1041 – An Act To Restore Farmlands and Improve Watersheds.

### Appropriations & Financial Affairs

**Room 228, State House, 1:00 p.m.**

**Tel: 287-1316**

LD 995 – An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Participating Local Districts in the Maine Public Employees Retirement System.

LD 1021 – An Act To Amend the Laws Pertaining to the Maine Public Employees Retirement System.

### Education & Cultural Affairs

**Room 202, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.**

**Tel: 287-3125**

LD 152 – An Act To Encourage Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation To Be Taught in High School.

LD 392 – An Act To Eliminate the Maine School Performance Grading System.

LD 579 – An Act To Allow Teachers To Teach and Students To Learn by Amending the Laws Governing Education Standards.

### Energy, Utilities & Technology

**Room 211, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.**

**Tel: 287-4143**

LD 743 – An Act To Protect the Environment and Assist Municipalities with the Recycling, Reuse and Processing of Solid Waste.

### Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

**Room 206, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.**

**Tel: 287-1338**

LD 942 – An Act To Permit the Use of Firearm Noise Suppression Devices in Hunting and To Provide for a Chief Law Enforcement Officer's Certification for Certain Firearms.

### Transportation

**Room 126, State House, 1:00 p.m.**

**Tel: 287-4148**

LD 437 – An Act To Ensure the Responsibility of the Department of Transportation for a Portion of U.S. Route 1 in York and for the U.S. Route 1 Bypass in Kittery.

LD 706 – Resolve, To Establish a Commission To Study Transportation Funding Reform.

LD 1122 – An Act Regarding the Use of Vehicles on Monhegan Island.

LD 1133 – An Act to Require Snow and Ice To Be Removed from Vehicles before Operation.

## Wednesday, April 15

### Criminal Justice & Public Safety

**Rm. 436, State House, 9:00 a.m.**

**Tel: 287-1122**

LD 1071 – An Act To Increase the Penalties for Vandalizing a Cemetery.

LD 1074 – An Act To Create a Cause of Action for Damage to Public Easements.

LD 1096 – An Act to Create the Crime of Intentional Interference with Business Operations.

### Education & Cultural Affairs

**Room 202, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.**

**Tel: 287-3125**

LD 578 – An Act To Redefine the Method by Which the Department of Education Determines Cost Sharing for School Construction and Renovation Projects for Municipalities within a School Administrative Unit.

LD 763 – An Act To Change the Budget Approval Process for Alternative Organizational Structures.

LD 1082 – An Act To Ensure Equitable Support of Education for Maine Students in School Administrative District No. 6 and School Administrative District No. 44.

LD 1222 – An Act To Remove Barriers to School Construction Financing in Regional School Units.

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## LEGISLATIVE HEARINGS (cont.)

LD 1266 – An Act To Expand and Improve State-approved School Construction Projects.

**Energy, Utilities & Technology**  
**Room 211, Cross State Office Building, 9:00 a.m.**  
**Tel: 287-4143**

LD 342 – An Act To Reduce the E-9-1-1 Surcharge.

LD 1223 – An Act To Revise the Charter of the Kennebunk Sewer District.

LD 1231 – An Act To Create the Southwest Harbor Water and Sewer District.

LD 1256 – An Act To Improve the Safety and Survival of 9-1-1 Callers and First Responders.

**1:00 p.m.**

LD 1124 – An Act To Manage Risks Associated with the Installation of Natural Gas Pipelines.

LD 1245 – An Act to Preserve the Efficiency of Transportation Maintenance and Construction Activities.

**Environment & Natural Resources**  
**Room 216, Cross State Office Building, 9:00 a.m.**  
**Tel: 287-4149**

LD 313 – An Act To Create a Sustainable Solution to the Handling, Management and Disposal of Solid Waste in the State.

LD 947 – An Act To Fund State Efforts To Reduce the Landfilling of Solid Waste.

LD 1194 – An Act To Allow Municipalities To Contract with and Dispose of Waste, including Residue, in State-owned Solid Waste Disposal Facilities, as Allowed under a Facility License, To Ensure Compliance with the Solid Waste Management Hierarchy.

**1:00 p.m.**

LD 795 – An Act To Encourage Prudent Development along the coast or in a Flood Zone by Considering Predictions for Sea Level Rise.

LD 1043 – An Act To Strengthen the Overboard Discharge Removal Grant Program.

**Health & Human Services**  
**Room 209, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.**  
**Tel: 287-1317**

LD 368 – An Act To Integrate the State's General Assistance and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Programs.

LD 369 – An Act To Align Municipal General Assistance Programs with the Immigration Status Policies of the Department of Health and Human Services.

LD 632 – An Act To Require the State To Administer and Fund the General Assistance Program.

LD 722 – An Act To Strengthen Penalties for Abuse of General Assistance.

LD 1035 – An Act to Create a 9-month Time Limit on General Assistance Benefits.

LD 1036 – An Act To Prioritize Use of Available Resources in General Assistance Programs.

LD 1037 – An Act To Establish a 180-day Residency Requirement for Welfare Benefits.

**Judiciary**  
**Room 438, State House, 1:00 p.m.**  
**Tel: 287-1327**

LD 891 – An Act To Help Municipalities Dispose of Certain Abandoned Property.

LD 1031 – An Act to Improve the Unclaimed and Abandoned Property Laws.

**State & Local Government**  
**Room 214, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.**  
**Tel: 287-1330**

LD 957 – RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Provide for the Popular Election of the Attorney General, Secretary of State and Treasurer of State.

LD 972 – An Act To Provide for the Nonpartisan Election of County Officials.

**Taxation**  
**Room 127, State House, 10:00 a.m.**  
**Tel: 287-1552**

LD 94 – An Act To Base the Excise Tax on the Purchase of a Motor Vehicle on the Price Paid.

LD 1148 – An Act To Implement a Local Ballot Referendum for Municipalities To Disallow Tax-exempt Status to Large Land Trusts.

**1:00 p.m.**

LD 116 – An Act To Expand the Use of Tax Increment Financing Revenue.

LD 519 – An Act To Allow Telecommunications Infrastructure Investment in Development Districts for Municipalities and Plantations.

LD 581 – An Act to Clarify the Municipal Development District Law.

LD 646 – An Act To Provide Incentives for Municipal Collaboration and Shared Services.

LD 871 – An Act To Provide for Cooperation between Municipalities with Tax Increment Financing Districts.

LD 900 – An Act To Make Public Certain Tax Information Related to Municipal Valuation.

LD 1007 – Resolve, To Study the Tax Exemption Provided to Nonprofit Entities.

LD 1055 – An Act To Allow a Municipality To Abate Taxes Assessed on Property That Is Destroyed.

LD 1159 – An Act To Modify the Property Tax Abatement Laws.

**Veterans & Legal Affairs**  
**Room 437, State House, 10:00 a.m.**  
**Tel: 287-1310**

LD 1219 – An Act to Allow Active Members and Veterans of the Armed Forces Who Are at Least 18 Years of Age and under 21 Years of Age To Consume Alcohol at Eligible Veterans' Organization Posts and American Legion Halls.

LD 1228 – An Act to Amend the Ballot Initiative Process To Ensure Support in Maine's Congressional Districts.

**Thursday, April 16**  
**Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry**  
**Room 214, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.**  
**Tel: 287-1312**

LD 1023 – An Act To Revise the Animal Welfare Laws.

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## LEGISLATIVE HEARINGS (cont.)

LD 1098 – An Act To Protect Children from Exposure to Pesticides.  
**Education & Cultural Affairs**  
**Room 202, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.**  
**Tel: 287-3125**

LD 557 – An Act To Provide Reasonable Accommodations for School Attendance for Children with Disabilities for Whom Medical Marijuana Has Been Recommended.

LD 725 – An Act To Increase Suicide Awareness and Prevention in Maine Public Schools.

LD 1251 – An Act to Safeguard Students' Personal and Private Information.

LD 1252 – An Act To Protect Student Data.

**Energy, Utilities & Technology**  
**Room 211, Cross State Office Building, 2:00 p.m.**  
**Tel: 287-4143**

LD 1063 – An Act To Promote Community Broadband Planning and Strengthen Economic Opportunity throughout Maine.

LD 1167 – An Act to Modernize Maine's Broadband Standards.

**Inland Fisheries & Wildlife**  
**Room 206, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.**  
**Tel: 287-1338**

LD 88 – An Act To Authorize Snowmobile Registration Reciprocity with the Provinces of New Brunswick and Quebec.

LD 561 – An Act To Recognize the Registrations of Snowmobiles and All-terrain Vehicles Owned by Residents of a State That Borders Maine.

LD 716 – An Act To Amend the Fees for Snowmobile Registration.  
LD 723 – An Act To Allow Reciprocal Recognition of New Hampshire and Maine Snowmobile Registrations.  
LD 1056 – An Act to Improve Snowmobiling in Maine.

**Taxation**  
**Room 127, State House, 1:00 p.m.**  
**Tel: 287-1552**

LD 503 – An Act To Provide Local Sales Tax Increment Disbursements.  
LD 594 – An Act To Allow the Creation of a Local Option Sales Tax by Referendum.

*Friday, April 17*

**Health & Human Services**  
**Room 209, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.**  
**Tel: 287-1317**

LD 949 – An Act To Enact the Recommendations of the Commission on Independent Living and Disability..