

Another Tax Reform Plan Placed on the Table

Last week’s Legislative Bulletin laid out the recommendations of the Taxation Committee regarding most of the major elements of the comprehensive tax reform proposal presented by Governor LePage in his proposed two-year state budget.

The strength of the Tax Committee’s recommendations came from the refreshing degree of bipartisan support that backed them up. Most of the recommendations on the various components of the Governor’s plan impacting municipal government and Maine’s property taxpayers were unani-

mously supported by the membership of the Tax Committee, and it’s not going to be easy for other decision-makers in the legislative process (e.g., the Appropriations Committee who received the Tax Committee’s recommendations, or the full Legislature itself) to run roughshod over those recommendations.

Another set of recommendations has now been thrust into the mix. On Thursday last week the Democrats in the Legislature advanced their alternative to the Governor’s tax reform proposal.

Although it is MMA’s understanding that the Democrats’ alternative “Better Deal for Maine” is not going to be formally advanced as a competing bill, it is a tax reform plan that certainly deserves to be entered into the mix of proposals on the table for the Legislature’s consideration.

What follows is a matrix that identifies various elements of the competing tax reform plans, as proposed by the Governor, as recommended by the Taxation Committee, and as proposed in the Democrats’ plan. *(continued on pages 2-3)*

Shifting GA Responsibilities to the State

The Health and Human Services Committee held hearings midweek on seven bills seeking to in one fashion or another amend the laws that guide the state/municipal General Assistance (GA) program. A description of six of those bills is provided in the table on page 8.

The bill of particular interest to municipal officials is LD 632, *An Act To Require the State To Administer and Fund the General Assistance Program*, graciously sponsored by Sen. Tom Saviello (Franklin County) on behalf of MMA’s 70-member Legislative Policy Committee. As proposed, the bill would shift the administration and all associated costs of the General Assistance program to the state.

In his testimony, Sen. Saviello stressed that although he advanced the bill on behalf of MMA, he truly believes that the state is the more appropriate entity to administer the GA program. The testimony provided by Sen. Saviello focused on three key points:

1. LD 632 would take municipalities out of the middle of the welfare debate. Under the current GA program, municipal officials are under constant scrutiny by

advocates, policymakers and property taxpayers. Although municipalities are mandated to provide the service according to state law and rules, those procedures are at times interpreted differently by the different interested parties involved in the process. This discord often leads to finger pointing and the assignment of blame, more often than not laid at the feet of the municipal officials trying to do the best they can. It is time to let the authors of the program administer the program.

2. Administration by the state could streamline the process for clients. Currently, municipal officials tap state level resources to determine eligibility. If the state administered the GA program, it would become a one-stop-shopping approach for clients. State agency officials would have immediate access to all the data necessary to determine eligibility for all welfare programs.

3. At a minimum, the repeal of the program would result in \$8 million in property tax savings representing the direct aid expended by municipalities, as well as an additional \$5 million representing the municipal administrative costs. Under the current program, the cost for administering

the program locally is borne solely by the property taxpayers.

The Health and Human Services Committee’s response to LD 632 can be described as cool, if not frigid. One member of the Committee raised concern that if the state took over program administration, the ability of people to obtain basic necessities (e.g., food, shelter, heat etc.) 24 hours/7 day week would no longer exist.

That observation (and expectation) is at the crux of the municipal frustration with the program. Although state lawmakers, agency officials and low income advocates recognize that the town-by-town administration of the program is the most effective way to deliver this “resource of last resort,” all of the interested parties, at some point in time, have all but demonized the municipal administration of the program. Municipal GA officials are simultaneously accused by the Department and by low income advocates of inappropriately operating the program. It is a lose/lose venture for municipal administrators.

In addition to MMA, the Mayors’ Coalition and Maine Welfare Directors Association provided testimony in support.

The work session on LD 632 and the other GA related bills is scheduled for Tuesday, April 28. *(continued on page 8)*

Competing Comprehensive Tax Reform Plans on the Tables

Plan Component	Governor's Tax Reform Plan	Taxation Committee Recommendation (unanimous unless otherwise noted)	Democrats' Alternative Plan
Municipal Revenue Sharing	Flat-fund the currently reduced revenue sharing distribution at \$62.5 million for FY 2016 and eliminate entirely for FY 2017 and thereafter.	Flat-fund currently reduced revenue sharing distribution at \$62.5 million for both years of the biennium.	Increase the revenue sharing distribution from flat-funding levels of \$62.5 million to \$77 million for both years of the biennium.
Homestead Property Tax Exemption	Eliminate the \$10,000 Homestead exemption for homeowners under 65 years of age, double the Homestead exemption for homeowners 65 years of age or older to \$20,000.	No change to current law. Retain the current \$10,000 Homestead for all Maine resident homeowners.	Double the current \$10,000 Homestead exemption for all Maine resident homeowners to \$20,000.
Property Tax Fairness Credit	Expand in several ways the value and the availability of the refundable "Property Tax Fairness Credit" now embedded within the state's income tax code (formerly the "Circuitbreaker" program), increasing the overall cost of the program from \$35 million to \$93 million.	Split vote, with 7 members rejecting the Governor's proposal and 6 members supporting it.	Adopts the Governor's proposal.
Taxing Tax Exempt Property	Impose the property tax on 50% of the value of most privately owned tax exempt properties after subtracting the first \$500,000 in value.	Do not impose the property tax on tax exempt properties.	Do not impose the property tax on tax exempt properties.
Transfer Telecommunications Personal Property to Municipal Jurisdiction	Transfer from state to municipal jurisdiction the authority to tax "two-way, interactive" personal property owned by telecommunications companies, shifting approximately \$8.25 million in tax revenue from state to municipal governments.	Accept the Governor's proposal without change.	Reject the Governor's proposal, No change to current law.
BETR-to-BETE Conversion	In four installments between tax year 2016 and tax year 2019, shift all currently taxable property enrolled in the Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement program over to tax exempt status.	Committee recommendation is split, with 7 members supporting the Governor's proposal and 6 members opposing.	Not mentioned in the Democrats' plan, so presumably not part of that proposal.
Sales Tax Rate Changes Current law: General sales – 5.5% Meals – 8% Lodging – 8% Short Term Auto Rental – 10%	General Sales – 6.5% Meals – 6.5% Lodging – 8% Short term auto – 8%	By unanimous vote: Meals – 8% Lodging – 9% Short term auto – 10% By split vote: General Sales 7 members 5.5% 6 members 6.5%	General sales – 5.5% Meals – 8% Lodging – 8% Short term auto – ? (Presumably retain the current 10% rate, but not stated in the plan).
Sales Tax Base Changes	Expand the sales tax base by applying the general sales tax rate to the retail value of six categories of services, excluding all "business to business" transactions: Amusement and Recreation services, Installation, Repair and Maintenance services (excluding automobile repair), Personal services, Domestic and Household services, Personal Property services, and Professional services.	Adopt the Governor's proposals with the following exceptions: Exclude professional services entirely, exclude museums from amusement and recreation services, exclude hair services from personal services, and exclude private waste management services from the domestic and household services category.	Adopt Governor's proposals without amendment.
Sales Tax Fairness Credit	Creates a refundable tax credit within the state's income tax code valued at \$250 to \$500 with income limitations in order to offset impact of increased sales taxes on lower-income Mainers.	Adopts the Governor's proposal.	Adopts the Governor's proposal.

Tax Reform Plan (cont'd)

Individual Income Tax Rates. The Democrats' "Better Plan For Maine" document lays out the differences between the Governor's proposal on income tax rate changes with their proposal as follows. To add the Taxation panel's recommendations to the mix, the Committee was essentially

split. Approximately half the Committee's membership supported the Governor's proposal with some modest variation. The other half essentially recommended the 5-bracket plan in the Democrats' alternative, although at the time the rate details were not provided.

	Governor's Plan FY 2016	Governor's Plan FY 2019	Democrats' Alternative Plan
	Bracket/Rate	Bracket/ Rate	Bracket/Rate
	\$0/0%	\$0/0%	\$0/0%
	\$9,700/5.75%	\$9,700/5.75%	\$5,200/6%
	\$50,000/6.95%	\$50,000/6.5%	\$25,000/6.5%
		\$175,000/5.75%	\$50,000/7.5%
			\$150,000/7.95%
Standard Deduction	\$6,200	\$6,200	\$9,000
Standard Deduction Phaseout	None	None	\$50,000 to \$75,000
Personal Exemption	\$3,950	\$3,950	\$3,950
Personal Exemption Phaseout	None	None	\$75,000 to \$125,000
Pension Exclusion	\$15,000	\$30,000	\$10,000
Fiscal Note FY 2017	-\$418 million	-\$489 million	-\$120,000

Motor Vehicle Excise Tax Fairness Conundrum

On Wednesday this week, the Taxation Committee held a hearing on LD 94, *An Act To Base the Excise Tax Imposed on the Purchase of a Motor Vehicle on the Price Paid*. Sponsored by Rep. Heather Sirocki of Scarborough, LD 94 would require the excise taxes assessed on motor vehicles to be calculated on the basis of the sale price rather than on the Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price (MSRP), as is currently the case. The bill would also require the state to reimburse municipalities for the excise tax revenue losses attributable to the change in the calculation methodology.

As Rep. Sirocki pointed out in her testimony, the issue addressed in LD 94 is not new. The Legislature is perennially asked to determine whether the law enacted in 1929 – 86 years ago – establishing a value-based assessment method for collecting motor vehicle excise tax is fair and appropriate.

A handful of proponents were on hand to support the bill and to express frustration with a system that assesses a tax using the MRSP, described as a value

"arbitrarily" set by the automobile industry, rather than the actual price paid. One proponent likened the current assessment model to requiring a customer to pay sales taxes on the full price of a discounted meal. Another proponent informed the Committee that he would purchase a new vehicle if it were not for the excise tax assessment process.

From the municipal perspective, however, the issue of fairness is based on the foundation of tax policy that requires all taxpayers to be treated equally. In its opposition to LD 94, MMA pointed out that since an excise tax is collected on motor vehicles in lieu of a property tax, the assessment should be based on value rather than the sale price. The value-based assessment ensures that all persons paying this form of property tax are treated equally, regardless of ability to negotiate a deal on the price of a vehicle.

Although the proposal would require the state to reimburse municipalities for the lost revenues, municipal officials are not convinced that the Legislature will honor the funding commitment for long,

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Motor Vehicle Excise Tax (cont'd)

if at all. As a result, if LD 94 is enacted municipal officials will need to determine how to absorb an estimated \$12 million loss in revenue.

MMA's claim that the loss of excise tax revenue would have a direct impact on municipal road maintenance and repair budgets was challenged by one member of the Taxation Committee. He pointed out that there is nothing in state statute obligating municipalities to dedicate those revenues to local transportation programs. He is correct. Since excise taxes are collected in lieu of property taxes, those revenues are available to fund any municipal program.

That being said, municipal officials are using collected excise tax revenues for transportation-related purposes without having to be told to do so by Augusta. On the basis of data provided through a transportation revenue and expenditure survey conducted by MMA in the fall of 2014, it is estimated that municipalities statewide spend \$356 million on roads and bridges annually. In comparison, the data published in Maine Revenue Services 2013 Municipal Valuation Return Statistical Summary show that municipalities statewide collect \$196 million in excise tax.

Based on the Committee's questions and initial conversations there seems to be some level of interest in amending the manner in which the motor vehicle excise tax is assessed. Municipal officials concerned about possible changes are urged to contact members of the Taxation Committee before its meets on Monday, April 27 to vote on LD 94.

“Concept Draft” Bill Emerges to Increase Landfill Fees

Municipalities that either operate solid waste landfills or that contract with landfill facilities are not doing enough to recycle and compost the solid waste they are mandated to manage. That theme strikes a steady drumbeat within the Legislature’s Environment and Natural Resources Committee. *ecomaine* in Portland, the Mid Maine Waste Action Corporation in Auburn, the Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM) and a group of citizen solid waste advocates are supportive of any proposal that makes using solid waste landfills more expensive in order to incentivize alternative solid waste management operations.

All of this came to light on Wednesday this week when the details of a “concept draft” bill were revealed to the Committee. LD 947, *An Act To Fund State Efforts To Reduce the Landfilling of Solid Waste*, is sponsored by Rep. Ben Chipman of Portland. “Concept draft” bills are just that... conceptual proposals written in narrative that are not required to contain actual proposed statutory language or the specific details that fill-out the sponsor’s intention. “Concept draft” legislation came on the scene about 15 years ago. Before concept draft legislation was authorized by legislative rules in the late 1990s, all bills needed to be submitted and printed with sufficient detail so people would be aware of the legislation’s potential impacts. Concept draft bills do away with that provision of

clear notice. You don’t quite know what is really inside a concept draft until the bill’s public hearing, if then.

The stated purpose of LD 947 was to establish the “Maine Solid Waste Reduction Fund,” administered by the Department of Environmental Protection, to provide grants to assist municipalities in the diversion of solid waste from disposal at landfills through equipment or infrastructure purposes or the establishment of programs to reduce the need for waste disposal. The concept draft said that the bill would capitalize the fund through the elimination of certain exemptions.

On Wednesday Rep. Chipman distributed the specific proposal to the Committee. It was the first time MMA learned about the details, but everyone in the Committee room seemed to know what was going on.

The bill would have two parts. First, the bill would limit the use of the resources in the existing Maine Solid Waste Management Fund to only support programs that improve efforts to reduce, reuse, recycle and compost municipal solid waste. The originally-proposed and separate “Maine Solid Waste Reduction Fund” would not be created. Second, the bill would repeal the current exemption provided to municipalities with respect to the \$2/ton fee for disposing of municipal solid waste in landfills. Every municipality that currently owns and operates a landfill, and every municipality that has a long-term

contract with a landfill (i.e., a contract over 9 months in duration), would have to pay an additional \$2/ton in tipping fees under this proposal, with those funds going to the Department of Environmental Protection to provide grants to municipalities to improve or expand their recycling/composting programs.

As indicated above, at least six individuals testified in strong support of LD 947, including citizen solid waste activists, NRCM, *ecomaine* and Mid Maine Waste. Their testimony was uniform. Landfilling municipal solid waste is bad and practically anything that makes it more expensive is good. Even though \$2 per ton is not a lot of money, according to these supporters, LD 947 will make landfilling more expensive so it’s good law.

MMA was the only opponent to the bill, but without knowing the bill’s details before the public hearing, there wasn’t any opportunity to assemble the actual financial impacts to the affected municipalities.

Lacking that information, MMA’s testimony focused on the ironic distinction between the title of LD 947 (*An Act To Fund State Efforts to Reduce the Landfilling of Solid Waste*) and the bill’s details, which will charge municipalities to pay into a fund, administered by the state, which distributes funds to municipalities to enhance their recycling efforts. It’s a

(continued on page 5)

Bill Requires Selectmen to Publicly Humiliate Their Election Clerks

(If you have shaming stocks in your town hall museum, it’s time to dust them off)

A contender for the most mean-spirited bill of the legislative session was presented to the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee on Monday this week, advanced apparently with at least some level of support from the Secretary of State’s Office (SOS).

Sponsored by Senator Andre Cushing (Penobscot Cty.), LD 1138, *An Act Regarding Municipal Reporting of Statewide Elections*, was submitted in an effort to compel municipal election officials to step smartly in line with certain mandates imposed on them to make sure the major political parties have fresh “voter participation history” information within 20 business days after an election. The political partisans want this information

as early as possible in order to prepare for their next campaigns. The SOS wants the information quickly as well, in order to double check the accuracy of the voting results, update and remove duplications from the Central Voter Registration List, and generally assure the integrity of the election.

In summary, LD 1138 requires the municipal officers of each municipality – the board of selectmen or town or city council – to publicly humiliate their election clerks for failing to file voter participation information with the SOS within the 20 business days after an election, which is the time frame allocated by state mandate. The public shaming must be achieved by published

notices identifying the clerk’s name and various shortcomings in local newspapers of general circulation as well as in the municipality’s annual town report.

In addition, the SOS in separate legislation and through LD 1138 is proposing to fine the clerks \$50 for each day of their non-compliance with their mandated reporting requirements. The LD 1138 fine would be levied against each noncompliant clerk personally, rather than against the clerk’s official office. At the public hearing it was advanced as a point of public amusement how the SOS would be very willing to drive out to each municipal clerk’s office to personally collect the financial penalties.

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Unlike any law ever enacted in the state's history, LD 1138 seeks to require Maine's municipal leaders to publicly shame or humiliate their employees. Authorizing the SOS to impose financial penalties against the clerks' personal estate completes the "belt and suspenders" approach to shoring up these reporting mandates. Four of Maine's ten legislative leaders are either sponsors or cosponsors of LD 1138.

Aside from its sponsor, LD 1138 had no other proponents at public hearing. MMA was the only opponent to the bill. The SOS, the Maine Town and City Clerks' Association and the Maine League of Women Voters testified "neither for nor against" LD 1138.

MMA expressed deep concern about the direction LD 1138 is taking and its impact on whatever vestiges might remain of the "partnership" relationship that exists between state government and the local governments over the implementation of unfunded state mandates. The ensuing testimony from the SOS described a situation where the smaller municipalities, especially, but also some of the larger towns and cities, do not have adequate staff capacity to properly administer the mandate. Staff hours have been cut back, election personnel are now performing many other job functions in the municipal front office, and lack of adequate computer infrastructure were cited as reasons why the mandatory filing deadlines were not being met. There were also repeated references to certain unnamed municipalities that are apparently notoriously delinquent in their reporting obligations.

Elected clerks were mentioned as the group from which the worst culprits might be predicted, as these clerks are beholden to no obvious management authority.

At the same time as these critiques were delivered, the SOS admitted that the reporting deadlines might be too aggressive and the larger municipalities, particularly, may not be able to file the voter participation information in the time allotted. Because the voter participation list is sealed for five days after an election, the 20 business days allotted is only 15 business days in real life. Although the SOS was more sensitive to the needs of the larger municipalities, subsequent

testimony by the town clerks pointed out that for the towns where the election clerk works only one or two days a week, the statutory 15 business days becomes only two business days, unless the town allows for more staff time to complete the task.

In its testimony, MMA pointed out that the mandate for municipalities to manage all regional, state and federal elections is perhaps the clearest example of state government appropriating for itself both the personnel and resources of local government to perform pure state functions. Unfortunately, the longstanding system to provide some level of financial support for these mandates – the Municipal Revenue Sharing Program – has been trashed by the Legislature in recent years. With the Legislature cutting \$320 million out of the revenue sharing distributions over the last decade, it is no wonder that towns are cutting back on staff hours, requiring municipal employees to multi-task, and delaying computer system purchases and maintenance programs. You might ask how state government responds to the inability to comply with mandates because of sharply reduced financial resources. If LD 1138 is an example, the answer is by adding on yet another mandate on top of the underlying mandates, imposing financial penalties on municipal employees, and requiring the shaming of municipal personnel.

Although the SOS supported the new financial penalties, that Office did not support the required published shaming of the town clerks for two reasons: (1) shaming in the view of the SOS would not be effective and result in improved compliance; and (2) the SOS didn't want to be saddled with the task of ensuring the shaming was being appropriately carried out.

The Secretary of State's Office testified that it has tried the collegial and collaborative approach with the towns, but it didn't work. If such an approach was used by the Secretary's Office, it's news to MMA. Although the issue is one that could helpfully involve the input of the boards of selectmen and town and city councils that oversee the work of the municipal election personnel, the Secretary of State's Office has never asked

MMA to take a look at the issue or lend a hand in its resolution, convene a working group of some kind, publish an article on the subject in the Maine Townsman, or anything along those lines. The first time MMA was ever apprised of this problem was when LD 1138 was printed.

So it goes in Augusta. The elections "omnibus" bill (LD 1335) has just been printed and among the two-dozen changes to election law in that legislation, a similar \$50 per diem fine is imposed for each day after the third business day after an election if the municipal clerk is delinquent in delivering the election return to the Secretary of State. In this proposal, the fine is not levied against the clerk personally.

It is possible that the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee will fold LD 1138 into its consideration of the omnibus elections bill in the weeks ahead.

Landfill Fees (cont'd)

"Robbing Peter to Pay Peter" proposal that "funds" the "state efforts" by appropriating local government resources.

Even if that made sense, the municipalities have had zero luck with state-administered funds as of recent, even funds that were capitalized with dedicated municipal resources. Municipal revenue sharing and the Local Road Assistance Program are Exhibits #1 and #2, respectively, but probably the most glaring example in recent times was the Fund for the Efficient Delivery of Local Services, called the "Local Efficiency Fund." That Fund, established by Maine's voters in 2004 and also designed to assist municipalities, was capitalized with a percentage of the municipal revenue sharing distribution and not one extra cent in state financing, but that didn't matter. The Legislature swept that Fund every single year of its existence until finally repealed in 2009.

The impact data on LD 947, now that we know its details, probably reside within the Department of Environmental Protection, so we will attempt to get the information there. If unsuccessful, we may have to survey the municipalities affected by this proposal to determine town-by-town impacts. Please stay tuned.

EUT Committee Considers Natural Gas Infrastructure Regulation

On Wednesday of this week the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee held a public hearing on LD 1124, *An Act To Manage Risks Associated with the Installation of Natural Gas Pipelines*, which would impose six types of new regulations on natural gas pipeline installations. These regulations include due process requirements like notice from gas utilities and excavators to nearby utilities, establishing an ability for those utilities to file objections, and various technical requirements. The most controversial technical requirement is the legislation's creation of minimum clearances between gas and other utility pipes, which would be set at two vertical feet and six horizontal feet of separation.

Representatives of various water and sewer districts, the Maine Water Environment Association, the Maine Water Utilities Association, and telecommunications utilities whose poles have been affected by gas pipeline installations all testified in support of LD 1124. These proponents cited the protection of existing infrastructure and their workers as the justification for this legislation, providing the Committee with numerous photographs of gas line intersections, overlays and cross bores that did not seem to have been constructed with safety or maintenance in mind.

Representatives of the gas companies Unifit, Summit Natural Gas and Maine

Natural Gas all opposed the bill, explaining how they currently engage in ever-improving and extensive planning and review processes with stakeholders. These companies are particularly concerned with enacting a statutory clearance requirement. According to Summit, the vertical placement of their infrastructure is restricted by science; frost develops in pipes that are placed too deep while those that are placed too close to the surface will freeze. Horizontal clearance capacities are limited by practical necessity. The MDOT has a three-foot horizontal clearance requirement that works well on wider state roads and highways, but local roads have much less room to maneuver.

MMA's Legislative Policy Committee voted in qualified support of LD 1124. Municipal officials in areas where natural gas pipelines have been installed, and in those areas still seeking gas, have put substantial effort into balancing the residential and commercial demands for reliable, low cost fuel with the need to protect crucial water and wastewater facilities as well as public safety. From the municipal perspective, most of the proposed changes in this bill seem sensible and timely because they would help prevent damage to residents, staff, and important existing municipal infrastructure.

MMA's support was qualified, how-

ever, out of concern for the difficulty if not impossibility of working with the one-size-fits-all six foot horizontal clearance standard. LPC members agree with the gas utilities that many local roads, especially those located in downtown areas, simply do not have room for six feet of separation. Because the 6x2 foot separation standard is somewhat central to the legislation, some legislators found it difficult to appreciate how MMA could support this bill while taking issue with the statutory separation standard.

The Public Utilities Commission testified Neither For Nor Against LD 1124, explaining its recent conclusion in a rulemaking inquiry that a single specific statewide separation requirement could create problems in urban and other areas where the right of way area is limited. The Commission believes more stringent standards are best applied and enforced by municipalities based on local conditions, addressing specific conditions in municipal permits. The Commission is currently on track to require gas utilities to adopt an "accommodation policy" that would require reasonable accommodation for owners of facilities located beneath gas facilities when those owners need to access their facilities.

Local officials who act as the natural

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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 20 – HOLIDAY

Tuesday, April 21

Education & Cultural Affairs

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

Tel: 287-3125

LD 956 – An Act To Create Community Schools.

Energy, Utilities & Technology

Room 211, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 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.

LD 1185 – An Act To Establish the Municipal Gigabit Broadband Network Access Fund.

LD 1323 – An Act To Expand Rural Broadband.

Health & Human Services

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

Tel: 287-1317

LD 1237 – An Act Regarding the Filing of Death and Marriage Records.

Labor, Commerce, Research & Economic Development

Room 208, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.

Tel: 287-1331

LD 1188 – An Act to Implement a Rental Assistance Program for Low-income Households and Individuals.

Transportation

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

Tel: 287-4148

LD 1080 – An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, Highway Fund and Other Funds and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2016 and June 30, 2017.

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HEARINGS (cont.)

LD 1175 – An Act To Amend Maine’s Motor Vehicle Statutes.

Wednesday, April 22

Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry
Room 206, Cross State Office Building, 9:00 a.m.
Tel: 287-1312

LD 1169 – RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Permit 25 Acres or Less To Be Withdrawn from Taxation as Timberland and Woodland without Penalty.

Appropriations & Financial Affairs
Room 228, State House, 10:00 a.m.
Tel: 287-1316

LD 1184 – An Act To Provide Funds to the Town of Millinocket Due to the Loss in Valuation of the Katahdin Paper Company.

Criminal Justice & Public Safety
Rm. 436, State House, 1:00 p.m.
Tel: 287-1122

LD 1112 – An Act To Make Technical Changes to the sex Offender Registration and Notification Acts of 1999 and 2013.

Education & Cultural Affairs
Room 202, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.
Tel: 287-3125

LD 1152 – An Act to Amend the Definition of “Property Fiscal Capacity” in the School Funding Law To Address Inequities Affecting Municipalities Experiencing Significant Reductions in Value.

LD 1153 – An Act To Restore Local Control of Education to Towns.

LD 1249 – An Act To Bring Equity to the State Portion of the Education Funding Formula as It Applies to Regional School Unit No. 35.

Health & Human Services
Room 209, Cross State Office Building, 9:30 a.m.
Tel: 287-1317

LD 622 – An Act To Require Training of Mandated Reporters under the Child Abuse Laws.

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

LD 1147 – An Act To Clarify the Mortgage Foreclosure Sale Process.

LD 1203 – An Act To Address the Detrimental Effects of Abandoned Property.

Labor, Commerce, Research & Economic Development
Room 208, Cross State Office Building, 9:30 a.m.
Tel: 287-1331

LD 1093 – An act Regarding the Municipalities to Which the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code Applies.

LD 1120 – An Act To Repeal the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code.

LD 1157 – An Act To Protect Preemployment Credit Privacy.

LD 1182 – An Act To Exempt Certain Agricultural Buildings from the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code.

LD 1191 – An Act To Remove the Municipal Mandate To Enforce the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code.

State & Local Government
Room 214, Cross State Office Building, 10:00 a.m.
Tel: 287-1330

LD 1206 – An Act To Allow County Corrections Officers To Participate in the Retired County and Municipal Law Enforcement Officers and Municipal Firefighters Health Insurance Program.

LD 1286 – An Act To Ensure the Use of Environmentally Responsible Insulation Materials in Taxpayer-funded Building Projects.

LD 1298 – An Act Relating to the Creation of Public-private Facilities and Infrastructure.

Thursday, April 23

Education & Cultural Affairs
Room 202, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.
Tel: 287-3125

LD 1281 – An Act to Reduce the Burden on Local Communities of Transportation Costs for Special Needs Students.

Energy, Utilities & Technology
Room 211, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.
Tel: 287-4143

LD 1293 – An Act To Allow a Local Distributed Energy Pilot Program.

Environment & Natural Resources
Room 216, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.
Tel: 287-4149

LD 1204 – An Act To Increase Recycling and Composting by Creating the Maine Recycling Fund.

LD 1208 – An Act Concerning Pavement Sealing Products.

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

LD 1034 – An act To Prohibit the Use of EBT Cards for Cash Withdrawals.

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

LD 409 – An Act To Lower the Individual Income Tax Incrementally to Zero.

Transportation
Room 126, State House, 1:00 p.m.
Tel: 287-4148

LD 1174 – Resolve, To Study the Feasibility and Cost of Providing Passenger Rail Service to the City of Bangor.

Friday April 24

Criminal Justice & Public Safety
Rm. 436, State House, 1:00 p.m.
Tel: 287-1122

LD 1068 – An act To Allow Certain Active Duty Military Personnel To Pay the Resident Application Fee for a Concealed Handgun Permit.

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

LD 1335 – An Act To Amend the Election Laws.

GA Responsibilities (cont'd)

LD	General Assistance (GA) Program Related Bills
368	This bill makes a person who has exhausted the 60-month lifetime limit for TANF ineligible to receive GA. MMA supported.
369	This bill makes non-citizens ineligible to receive GA. MMA opposed.
722	This bill makes an individual who as a result of falsifying an application has been issued GA ineligible to receive additional aid for 120 days and until the municipality is reimbursed for the fraudulently provided aid. MMA supported.
1035	This bill places a 275 day (nine month) limit over a five year period on an otherwise qualifying applicant who is both able to work and who does not have any dependents. MMA opposed.
1036	This bill makes an applicant for GA who voluntarily abandons or refuses to use available resources or forfeits an available resource due to fraud, misrepresentation or intentional violation or refusal to comply with rules without just cause ineligible to receive GA to replace that resource for a period of 120 days. MMA supported.
1037	This bill establishes a 180-day (six month) residency requirement for applicants for several federal/state and state/municipal assistance programs, including GA. MMA opposed.

Natural Gas (cont'd)

gas permitting authorities within their jurisdictions will be watching the work session on LD 1124, tentatively scheduled for April 22nd at 1pm, with the hope that Committee members are able to find a way, via more flexible statutory language or a waiver process or otherwise, to provide additional state guidance without effectively inhibiting the flow of natural gas to urban areas with narrow rights of way.