

Household Personal Property Update

The Taxation Committee was considering a bill that would send out to the voters a proposed constitutional amendment that would exempt individually-owned, non-income producing personal property from taxation. The purpose of the constitutional amendment would be to eliminate any obligation on the part of the state to reimburse municipalities 50% of lost tax revenue.

The constitutional resolution, LD 56, *Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Facilitate the Repeal of the Taxation of Personal Property Valued at \$1,000 or More*, is sponsored by Rep. Chris Barstow (Gorham), who has waged a multi-year effort to eliminate the taxation of household personal property after a short-lived effort to assess that type of property in Windham.

At the request of the Committee, MMA conducted a statewide survey of municipal assessors and assessing agents in an effort determine current assessing practices with respect to non-income producing, individually-owned personal property with an assessed value of \$1,000 or more. According to Maine law, that classification of property (with some specific exemptions) is subject to taxation.

103 municipalities responded to the survey, or a little more than 20% of all municipalities in Maine. 93 of the respondents indicated they did not assess household personal property of any kind unless it was income-producing. The most common reasons given for not assessing this classification of property was administrative inefficiency, lack of

priority, lack of staff, and lack of enforceability of personal property taxation for these relatively small items.

Seven respondent municipalities indicated they did assess some types of property within this classification, specifically large tractors, bulldozers, and other types of unregistered wheeled or tracked machinery.

Three respondent municipalities indicated they could not be sure because

the taxable personal property was listed on a "Section 706" self-declaration form, and it was impossible to know if it was income-producing personal property or not.

The results of the survey suggest that 7% - 10% of the municipalities statewide assess some type of individually-owned personal property, almost exclusively unregistered motor vehicles either on tracks or wheels.

After receiving this information and debating the issue, the Committee voted 10 - 2 that LD 56 "ought not to pass". According to the majority, the "problem" identified by LD 56, such as it is, did not rise to the level of needing a constitutional fix.

Excise Tax Changes Still Under Consideration

Without being specific about its intentions, the Taxation Committee debated and then tabled further consideration of the bill it heard last week that would restructure the motor vehicle excise tax system in a way that would reduce municipal road construction and maintenance revenue by millions of dollars a year.

LD 345, *An Act To Base the Excise Tax on Motor Vehicles on the Purchase Price*, would throw out the age-old system of basing the motor vehicle on the "maker's list price" and replace it with a sales tax-type approach where the local excise tax collector would ask the person registering a car what he or she paid for the vehicle. That would become the base upon which the excise tax would be based.

At its work session this week the Committee appeared to be leaning to-

ward an "ought not to pass" recommendation, but several Committee members, along with the bill's sponsor (Sen. Bruce Bryant of Oxford County), urged the Committee to keep LD 345 alive by tabling the bill, and the Committee obliged.

Where the bill will go from here is not entirely clear. Many of the Committee's members and its chairs make repeated references to a comprehensive "tax reform" bill to be created by the Committee during the legislative session, but the scope, structure, elements, goals, or guiding principles of such a "tax reform" package have not been articulated by the Committee, at least publicly. In any event, there is some reference to including excise tax changes in such a "reform" package.

Other advocates for changes in the

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Monitoring GA Maximums

On Thursday of this week, the Health and Human Services Committee held a public hearing on LD 367, *An Act to Monitor and Maintain Maximum Levels of Assistance in the General Assistance Program*. As proposed by Sen. Michael Brennan (Cumberland Cty.), the bill would provide a mechanism for ensuring that the maximum levels of assistance under the state/municipal General Assistance (GA) program are sufficient by guaranteeing that the year-to-year increases in the maximum levels of assistance would receive an inflationary adjustment.

Under the terms of LD 367, starting in 2005 the maximum level of assistance under the GA program would be the greater of 110% the federal Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) fair market rent, as is now required in law, or the result of adjusting the previous year's maximum by the change in the federal poverty level, which is an inflationary type adjustment.

The need for such a baseline inflationary mechanism was made apparent this year when HUD projected that the fair market rents in most areas of the state had decreased, although all other factors indicated otherwise. The problem with the low-balled HUD rent-price projections is that it has the result of artificially lowering the maximum amount of assistance provided to Maine's General Assistance recipients. By requiring that the maximum level of assistance under GA be at a minimum annually adjusted by the percent change in the federal poverty

level, the proposal in LD 367 helps to monitor against the artificial decreases in HUD figures.

Proponents of LD 367 included MMA, the Maine Equal Justice Project and the Maine Welfare Directors Association (MWDA), all of who supported the mechanism proposed in the bill to monitor and ensure that the maximum level of assistance provided under the GA program is sufficient.

Vicky Edgerly, welfare director for the city of Biddeford, spoke on behalf of the MWDA. The MWDA supports LD 367 as a good first step in addressing the problem that the maximum levels of assistance do not reflect the actual expenses associated with living in certain Maine communities. According to Edgerly, the maximum amount of benefit Biddeford can offer to a single person is approximately \$500, although the going rent for the area is over \$600. MWDA also believes that the minor change proposed in the bill will make it easier to administer the GA program, particularly if the changes allow the administrators to provide assistance under the regular procedures rather than under the more intensive emergency procedures.

The only other testimony was provided by the Department of Health and Human Services. Representative for the Department testified "neither for nor against" the bill, because while they support the concept they are troubled by the \$16,500 fiscal note to the state associated with LD 367.

LD 1 CORNER (cont'd)

charter "otherwise provides or prohibits a petition and referendum process". As is the case with much of LD 1, it is not clear how these words apply to the real world. One interpretation is that the petition and referendum process created by LD 1 does not apply if the municipal charter expressly prohibits a petition to challenge a council's budget action. Otherwise, the LD 1 provisions do apply, but if alternative procedures are provided in the charter (such as different requirements regarding the number of signatures or the petition submission deadline), the charter's alternative procedures would apply. (Note: Another view is that a charter that vests all powers in the council and does not provide for initiative for budget matters effectively "prohibits" such a petition.)

Given these ambiguities, any "charter municipality" that might be affected by the petition and referendum system created by LD 1 would be well advised to obtain an opinion from its municipal attorney regarding the applicability of the new law given the specific initiative and referendum provisions of the town or city charter.

EXCISE TAX (cont'd)

excise tax system support a less holistic approach. Instead of waiting for the elusive tax reform package, these Committee members advocate shifting the excise tax mill rate structure away from the new car buyer and onto the older car owner, or flatly subtracting a few thousand dollars from the list price, or basing the excise tax on the purchase price rather than the list price for just the first year or two of car ownership before returning to the list price after the car is a few years old.

It looks as though this proposal, and a variety of negative financial impacts on the municipalities that are related to this proposal, will be hanging around this legislative session for the foreseeable future.

Legislative Bulletin

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Editorial Staff: Geoffrey Herman, Kate Dufour, Jeff Austin, and Laura Veilleux of the State & Federal Relations staff.

Q & A

LD 1 Corner

Q. I am told that LD 1 creates a “peoples’ veto” process that allows petitions to force budget decisions made by town or city councils to be reconsidered by the voters at referendum. How does that process work?

A. LD 1 creates a “petition and referendum” process for certain council decisions regarding the municipal budget and, separately, certain council decisions regarding the school budget. Because there are some differences with the procedure depending on whether it is a municipal or school budget that is being adopted by the council, the description of the procedures will be taken up separately. All of the municipal procedures in LD 1 regarding the petition and referendum process only apply in those municipalities where the local charter vests final budget adoption authority in the town or city council.

Municipal budget, general rule. On the municipal side of the budget, the petition-and-referendum process becomes available to the voters if the town or city council adopts a budget that exceeds or increases the so-called “property tax levy limit”. As described in previous editions of the *Legislative Bulletin*, the “property tax levy limit” is the municipality’s core municipal commitment multiplied by one plus the municipality’s “growth limitation factor”, as that total may be adjusted by any “net new funding” to the extent that adjustment is applicable.

If the council adopts a municipal budget that causes the property tax commitment to exceed the property tax levy limit (excluding those same four categories: county assessment, school spending, TIF payments and overlay), the voters of the community have a general right under LD 1 to initiate by petition a referendum vote on the question of exceeding the property tax levy limit. (Note: this general right may not apply in some municipalities depending on the word-

ing of the town or city charter. Details regarding the relationship between the peoples’ veto opportunity provided in LD 1 and the pertinent provisions of a municipal charter are provided at the end of this response.)

Municipal budget: petition and referendum process. In order to initiate the referendum vote on the council’s decision to exceed or increase the property tax levy limit, a petition must be filed with the municipal officers within 30 days of the council’s vote to adopt the budget and to exceed the property tax levy limit. The petition must be signed by at least 10% of the number of registered voters voting in the last gubernatorial election in the municipality. If a valid petition is submitted in a timely manner, the council must schedule a referendum vote at the next regular election or at a special election called for that purpose. The ballot article the voters will be voting on is, in the words of LD 1, “their opinion” of the budget article adopted by the council, yes or no. The results of the vote must be declared by the municipal officers and entered onto the municipal records. It is not clear what the effect is of the voters’ “opinion”.

School budget, general rule. The general rule governing the right of the voters to compel a referendum vote on the council’s decision regarding the school spending limit is somewhat different. As described in previous editions of the *Legislative Bulletin*, every school system’s spending limit is a total budget number generated by the Department of Education as that school’s 100% allocation as determined by the Essential Programs and Services (EPS) school funding model. The specific, single article in the string of required school budget articles where that decision is made is the article calling for a certain amount of “additional local appropriations”.

Accordingly, if the council approves the “additional local appropriations” article that exceeds the 100% EPS figure

by any amount, the petition and referendum process is available to the voters. In a departure from the petition process regarding the adopted municipal budget, the petition and referendum process is also available to the voters if a school budget over the EPS limit is presented to the council and the council elects not to exceed the EPS threshold. In that case, also, the voters can force a referendum vote under LD 1 to approve the school board’s proposed budget, overriding the council’s decision not to do so.

School budget: petition and referendum process. The process of petitioning for a referendum vote on the council’s school budget decision is the same as it is for a petition on a municipal budget. The petition must be filed within 30 days of the council action and it must be signed by at least 10% of the number of voters who voted at the last gubernatorial election in the municipality. Also similar to the municipal petition and referendum process, the ballot to the voters is written to ascertain “their opinion” – yes or no – on the additional local appropriations article acted on by the council. However, in contrast to the municipal process, LD 1 gives this vote legal effect.

Specifically, when a valid school budget petition is presented to the council, the council’s vote on the additional local appropriations article is suspended. There is no parallel suspension of the municipal budget or any element of it. Also, if the voters disapprove the proposed “additional local appropriations” article, the article is expressly defeated and the school board is allowed to offer an alternative proposal. There is no parallel language regarding a “no” vote on the municipal side of the ledger, leaving the impacts of that “no” vote entirely up in the air.

Relationship to the municipal charter. As indicated above, the voters are provided a general right to this petition and referendum process: (1) when the council votes to exceed or increase the municipality’s property tax levy limit; and (2) when the council votes to approve or reject a proposed school budget that exceeds 100% of EPS. The opportunity to petition for a referendum vote is not provided, however, if the municipal

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Kaleidoscopic Bonds

Toward the end or at the very end of the legislative session this spring, a package of bond proposals will be approved by the Legislature to be sent out to the voters, presumably in November, to see if Maine’s electorate will approve the borrowing plan.

The possible components of that bond proposal, some of which were spilled out on to the table last week, are a long way away from any convenient packaging. The wish-list of borrowing that has been presented or printed thus far has been correctly characterized by the Maine press as “kaleidoscopic”.

If all the bond proposals that have been printed as bills are laid end-to-end, there would be \$1 billion in borrowing requests, many of which overlap each other as different legislators or the Governor propose borrowing for the same purpose. What follows is a list of the borrowing proposals according to category. The list demonstrates both the depth and breadth of borrowing ideas that are going to be given consideration by the Legislature.

In terms of the allowable size of the 2005 bond package, there is a difference of opinion between the Governor, who is supporting a \$197 million package, and the Republicans, who appear uncomfortable going beyond the \$100-\$120 million range.

Against this backdrop, MMA is advocating for three core elements to whatever bond package ultimately attracts consensus.

- A solid transportation bond that funds important bridge and highway projects, along with the ferry, rail and air elements that fill out the state’s capital transportation needs.
- An environmental bond that aggressively leverages all available federal funds to support the investments that need to be made to the wastewater, drinking water and stormwater facilities to meet federal environmental mandates, as well as the extremely effective Small Community Program to address septic system failures in rural Maine; and
- A recapitalization of the Municipal Investment Trust Fund.

According to information provided by the Department of Economic and Community Development, over the last

two years the Trust Fund has been directly responsible for putting into motion downtown improvements, riverfront improvements, economic development projects (including business parks, industrial parks and hotel development), historic cultural improvements and required capital responses to federal environmental mandates.

The \$10 million provided to the Trust Fund through a previous bond package has been all but exhausted after triggering over \$45 million of construction projects throughout the state.

A tremendous amount of scrutiny is applied at both the local and state level before any of these projects go forward, and the recent history of the Trust Fund projects shows a consistent ratio of matching funds to Trust Fund grants of approximately 4:1.

It’s hard to imagine how any other single component of the bond package could deliver as geographically widespread, locally-supported economic stimulus and necessary capital improvements as would be achieved with a recapitalization of the Municipal Investment Trust Fund.

Spending Proposal	Aggregate Requests	#Separate Requests
Land for Maine’s Future	\$275	4
Biotech/Research and Development	\$129	6
University of Maine	\$108	4
Global Warming	\$100	1
Employee Recruitment/Retention	\$51	2
Agriculture	\$48.6	4
Small Business/Gen. Economic Development	\$42	5
Transportation	\$38	1
Housing (Workforce/Affordable)	\$37	3
Cultural/Creative Economy	\$30	2
Working Waterfront	\$18	2
Environment	\$16.5	1
Municipal Investment Trust Fund	\$15	1
Train Services	\$15	1
Shared Trails	\$10	1
State Parks/Historic Structures	\$12.2	3
Fish Hatcheries	\$7	1
GIS Mapping	\$6	1
Fishing Rights	\$5	1
Drug Treatment	\$3	1
Public Schools	\$2.5	1
National Guard Armories	\$1	1
Hospice	\$1	1

(The bill summaries are written by MMA staff and are not necessarily the bill's summary statement or an excerpt from that summary statement. During the course of the legislative session, many more bills of municipal interest will be printed than there is space in the *Legislative Bulletin* to describe. Our attempt is to provide a description of what would appear to be the bills of most significance to local government, but we would advise municipal officials to also review the comprehensive list of LDs of municipal interest that can be found on MMA's website, www.memun.org.)

Business, Research & Economic Development

LD 647 – An Act To Provide Incentives to Businesses That Locate to Existing Buildings. (Sponsored by Sen. Mitchell of Kennebec Cty; additional cosponsors.)

This “concept draft” bill proposes to provide incentives to businesses that move into existing vacant buildings by expediting approval of zoning or ordinance changes and providing reduced property tax rates for those businesses.

LD 993 – Resolve, Directing the Plumbers' Examining Board to Update the State Plumbing Code to the Current Version of the Uniform Plumbing Code. (Sponsored by Sen. Damon of Hancock Cty; additional cosponsors.)

This resolve would direct the Plumbers' Examining Board to update the State Plumbing Code to the current version of the Uniform Plumbing Code.

LD 1056 – Resolve, Directing the Plumbers' Examining Board To Adopt the International Plumbing Code. (Sponsored by Sen. Sullivan of York Cty; additional cosponsors.)

This bill would direct the Plumbers' Examining Board to adopt the International Plumbing Code as the new plumbing code for the state.

Criminal Justice & Public Safety

LD 53 – An Act To Criminalize Harming a Dog Used for Law Enforcement Purposes. (Sponsored by Rep. Fischer of Presque Isle; additional cosponsors.)

This bill would amend the law creating a crime for intentionally or knowingly harming a dog that is certified for law enforcement uses to remove the implicit requirement that the person harming the dog had knowledge of the dog's certification status.

LD 502 – An Act To Enable Police Departments To Solicit Donations for Colleagues Suffering from Catastrophic Illness. (Emergency) (Sponsored by Rep. Collins of Wells; additional cosponsors.)

This bill would authorize a law enforcement agency, law enforcement association or law enforcement officer to solicit funds for a law enforcement officer who is suffering from a catastrophic illness after the law enforcement agency, association or officer obtains the approval of the governing body of the area in which the solicitation will occur and the Attorney General.

LD 670 – An Act To Protect Children Using Maine's Athletic Fields and Parks from Drug Dealers. (Sponsored by Rep. Hotham of Dixfield; additional cosponsors.)

This bill would authorize municipalities to designate certain areas within the town or city as “safe zones”, such as athletic fields, parks, playgrounds and recreational facilities. Once designated as a “safe zone”, the drug laws and prison sentencing requirements that

apply to the selling of illegal drugs within 1,000 feet of any school would also apply to the selling of drugs within 1,000 feet of any “safe zone”.

LD 714 – Resolve, To Benefit Public Safety Using Retired Law Enforcement Officers. (Emergency) (Sponsored by Rep. Nutting of Oakland; additional cosponsors.)

This resolve would direct the Commissioner of the Department of Public Safety to implement a certification process that would allow retired law enforcement officers to carry concealed weapons.

LD 1018 – An Act To Require a Criminal Background Check for the Initial Licensure of Emergency Medical Services Personnel. (Sponsored by Rep. Sykes of Harrison; additional cosponsors.)

This bill would make it clear that the criminal background check for Emergency Services Personnel is only required for the applicant's initial license and is not required for relicensing.

Education & Cultural Affairs

LD 443 – An Act To Encourage Cooperation between School Districts. (Sponsored by Rep. Bowen of Rockport; additional cosponsors.)

This bill would establish a 17-member “Educational Efficiency Advisory Group”, made up of legislators, state agency representatives, and school representatives. The Advisory Group would be charged with developing ideas that would promote communication, cooperation, and efficient delivery of services.

LD 701 – An Act To Ensure Equality in School Funding. (Sponsored by Rep. Trahan of Waldoboro; additional cosponsors.)

This “concept draft” bill would require the Education Committee to amend the essential programs and services school funding model to ensure that state school subsidy is distributed in such a way that all municipalities apply the same mill rate for EPS-based education.

LD 797 – An Act Authorizing the State Board of Education to Mediate School Attendance Disputes. (Sponsored by Sen. Nutting of Androscoggin Cty; additional cosponsors.)

This bill would authorize the State Board of Education to mediate a dispute between school administrative units over an attendance disagreement when a student wishes to attend a school that is close geographically but outside the school system in which the student lives.

LD 811 – An Act To Assist the Implementation of the Essential Programs and Services School Funding Model. (Sponsored by Rep. Perry of Calais; additional cosponsors.)

This “concept draft” bill proposes to amend the essential programs and services school funding model in ways designed to assist schools in implementing the law.

LD 875 – An Act To Change the Procedure When a Maine School Administrative District Budget Fails. (Sponsored by Rep. Cebra of Naples; additional cosponsors.)

This bill would limit the ability of the board of directors of a School Administrative District (SAD) to reschedule multiple budget adoption votes in the event the proposed SAD budget or part of the proposed budget fails to be approved at referendum. Under the terms of the bill, the directors could schedule just one additional vote on the budget, either by referendum or through the open meeting process. If the proposed budget or part of the budget is not approved at the second voting opportunity, the school budget or the relevant part of the school budget from the preceding year becomes the school's budget.

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LD 951 – An Act To Amend Adjustments to Transportation Costs under the School Funding Formula. (Sponsored by Rep. Mills of Farmington.)

This bill would amend the way school transportation costs are calculated under the Essential Programs and Services school funding model (EPS). Specifically, this bill would require an analysis of one-way or dead-end runs and any other transportation-related cost factors that would cause an undue burden on the school.

Judiciary

LD 483 – An Act To Facilitate Real Estate Ownership. (Sponsored by Rep. Bowen of Rockport; additional cosponsor.)

This “concept draft” bill proposes to amend real property law to allow a person who owns less than 100% of a parcel of property to gain clear title by providing that the parcel is “in fact” owned by the person. One method of proof would be that the person has made the property tax payments on the property for at least 20 years and no one else may tax payments during that time.

LD 491 – An Act To Cure an Inconsistency Regarding Judgment Liens. (Sponsored by Rep. Davis of Falmouth; additional cosponsors.)

The summary description of this bill describes it as correcting an inconsistency in the laws governing execution liens (a.k.a., “judgment liens”). Apparently, the inconsistency was created on September 29, 1995 when the duration of writs of execution was extended from one year to three years, but the period during which those writs could be used to create judgment liens was left at one year. The bill corrects that inconsistency by extending the period during which an execution of a lien on real estate, personal property or motor vehicles may be filed from one year to three years. The bill also provides that any lien that conforms to the requirements regarding notice and duration is valid for three years if notice of execution was filed after September 19, 1995.

Legal & Veterans Affairs

LD 929 – An Act To Create Freedom of Citizen Information Regarding Ballot Questions and Political Action Committees. (Sponsored by Rep. Faircloth of Bangor; additional cosponsors.)

This bill would add a number of additional requirements to the process of gathering signatures for a state-level citizens initiative. Among the several proposed requirements, the bill would require a person circulating a petition for signatures within 250 feet of a polling place to post a sign that reads “Not a Polling Place”.

LD 939 – Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Preserve the Integrity of the Citizen-initiated Petition Process. (Sponsored by Rep. Bowles of Sanford; additional cosponsors.)

This resolution would send out to the voters a proposed constitutional amendment that would require any citizen initiative that proposes an expenditure of state revenues to: (1) include a revenue source sufficient to fund the expenditure; (2) establish a new fund designed to sufficiently finance the expenditure; or (3) identify reductions in existing state programs sufficient to offset the expenditure.

LD 946 – An Act To Prohibit Petition Blockers from Polling Places. (Sponsored by Sen. Mayo of Sagadahoc Cty; additional cosponsors.)

This bill would prohibit a person from attempting to persuade someone to refuse to sign a citizens petition during a signature gathering process within 250 feet of the polling place.

LD 1087 – An Act To Protect the Citizen Initiative Signature Collection Process at Polling Places. (Sponsored by Rep. Eder of Portland.)

This bill would prohibit opponents of a citizen initiative signature collection effort from attempting to influence a person’s decision to sign a petition.

LD 1099 – Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Ensure Statewide Participation in Initiating a Referendum by Requiring 10% of the Total Vote by County. (Sponsored by Rep. Saviello of Windham; additional cosponsors.)

Current constitutional law requires a proposed citizen initiative to be signed by at least 10% of the number of voters who voted in the last gubernatorial election. This resolution would send out to the voters a proposed constitutional amendment that would require proposed citizen initiatives to meet the 10% requirement in each county of the state.

State & Local Government

LD 925 – An Act To Fairly Apportion the Cost of Sheriff Patrol Services. (Sponsored by Rep. Barstow of Gorham; additional cosponsors.)

This bill would require all routine patrol services provided by a county sheriff to be conducted pursuant to a contract between each municipality desiring the services and the county. The bill further provides that the costs of any non-routine sheriff services must be apportioned among the municipalities within the county according to actual use rather than on the basis of the municipality’s state valuation.

LD 992 – An Act To Reform County Governance. (Sponsored by Sen. Mills of Somerset County.)

This “concept draft” bill proposes to restructure county government by: (1) requiring all counties to have 5 commissioners; (2) establish a term of office for all county commissioners of 4 years; (3) authorize the county commissioners to appoint the sheriff, register of deeds and county treasurer; (4) dissolve the office of judge of probate; and (5) place the position of register of probate under the Superior Court.

Taxation

LD 902 – Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Change the Method of Calculating Property Values To Preserve Home Ownership in Maine. (Sponsored by Sen. Courtney of York Cty; additional cosponsors.)

This resolution would send out to the voters a proposed constitutional amendment that would repeal the “just value” method of assessing real property and replace it with a system that would lock-in the property’s assessed value as of April 1, 2006, and cap any increases in that assessed value at the level of the most recent Consumers’ Price Index (CPI), except that adjustments to those assessed values could be made to reflect the just value of any improvements or degradations to the property. Upon a change of ownership, the assessed value would be adjusted to the just value of the property or its purchase price, whichever is higher.

LD 1009 – Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Allow Real Estate To Be Valued Differently Based on the Residency of the Owner. (Sponsored by Sen. Turner of Cumberland Cty; additional cosponsors.)

This resolution would send out to the voters a proposed constitutional amendment that would fix the taxable value of property owned by Maine residents until such a time as the property is transferred to a non-resident. All property owned by non-residents would continue to be assessed at the property’s just value.

LD 1060 – Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Value Land Based on Its Current Use. (Sponsored by Sen. Cowger of Kennebec Cty; additional cosponsors.)

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LEGISLATIVE HEARINGS

NOTE: The following schedule calls for a number of public hearings on bills that have not been printed as of yet. Those bills are referenced below by their "LR" number or as having "no LD". If the bill has not been printed, it is impossible for the general public to know the bill's content. We have included below those bond issue hearings that may have an impact on municipal government on the basis of their title.

Monday, March 7

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

LD 53 – An Act To Criminalize Harming a Dog Used for Law Enforcement Purposes. (Sponsored by Rep. Fischer of Presque Isle; additional cosponsors.)

LD 502 – An Act To Enable Police Departments To Solicit Donations for Colleagues Suffering from Catastrophic Illness. (Emergency) (Sponsored by Rep. Collins of Wells; additional cosponsors.)

LD 714 – Resolve, To Benefit Public Safety Using Retired Law Enforcement Officers. (Emergency) (Sponsored by Rep. Nutting of Oakland; additional cosponsors.)

LD 760 – An Act To Assist Municipalities in Recruiting Emergency Services Personnel. (Sponsored by Rep. Rector of Thomaston; additional cosponsors.)

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

LD 196 – An Act To Enhance MaineCare Reimbursement Rates for Ambulance Services. (Sponsored by Rep. Tuttle of Sanford; additional cosponsors.)

State & Local Government Room 216, Cross State Office Building, 10:00 a.m. Tel: 287-1330

LD 361 – An Act To Reestablish the Penobscot County Budget Committee. (Sponsored by Rep. Blanchard of Old Town; additional cosponsors.)

LD 551 – An Act To Amend the Budget Timetable for Oxford County. (Sponsored by Rep. Hanley of Paris; additional cosponsors.)

LD 727 – An Act To Amend the Knox County Budget Process. (Sponsored by Rep. Bowen of Rockport; additional cosponsor.)

Tuesday, March 8

Business, Research & Economic Development Room 208, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m. Tel: 287-1331

LD 647 – An Act To Provide Incentives to Businesses That Locate to Existing Buildings. (Sponsored by Sen. Mitchell of Kennebec Cty; additional cosponsors.)

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

LD 443 – An Act To Encourage Cooperation between School Districts. (Sponsored by Rep. Bowen of Rockport; additional cosponsors.)

LD 797 – An Act Authorizing the State Board of Education to Mediate School Attendance Disputes. (Sponsored by Sen. Nutting of Androscoggin Cty; additional cosponsors.)

LD 701 – An Act To Ensure Equality in School Funding. (Sponsored by Rep. Trahan of Waldoboro; additional cosponsors.)

LD 811 – An Act To Assist the Implementation of the Essential Programs and Services School Funding Model. (Sponsored by Rep. Perry of Calais; additional cosponsors.)

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

LD 668 – An Act To Amend the Land Use Regulation Laws. (Sponsored by Rep. Joy of Crystal; additional cosponsors.) (By Request.)

Labor Room 220, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m. Tel: 287-1333

LD 493 – An Act To Require That All Public School Employees Be Paid a Livable Wage Rate. (Sponsored by Rep. Davis of Falmouth; additional cosponsors.)

LD 546 – An Act to Promote Responsible Contracting Practices on State Projects. (Sponsored by President Edmonds of Cumberland Cty; additional cosponsors.)

Natural Resources Room 214, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m. Tel: 287-4149

LD 635 – An Act To Amend the Maine Sanitary District Enabling Act. (Sponsored by Rep. Koffman of Bar Harbor.)

Wednesday, March 9

Criminal Justice & Public Safety Room 436, State House, 9:30 a.m. Tel: 287-1122

LD 670 – An Act To Protect Children Using Maine's Athletic Fields and Parks from Drug Dealers. (Sponsored by Rep. Hotham of Dixfield; additional cosponsors.)

Health & Human Services Room 209, Cross State Office Building, 9:00 a.m. Tel: 287-1317

LD 21 – An Act To Enhance Community Involvement Regarding Methadone Clinics. (Sponsored by Rep. Mazurek of Rockland; additional cosponsors.)

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

LD 491 – An Act To Cure an Inconsistency Regarding Judgment Liens. (Sponsored by Rep. Davis of Falmouth; additional cosponsors.)

LD 483 – An Act To Facilitate Real Estate Ownership. (Sponsored by Rep. Bowen of Rockport; additional cosponsor.)

Legal & Veterans Affairs Room 437, State House, 1:15 p.m. Tel: 287-1310

LD 777 – An Act To Enhance Enforcement of Liquor Laws. (Sponsored by Rep. Fisher of Brewer; additional cosponsors.)

State & Local Government Room 216, Cross State Office Building, 10:00 a.m. Tel: 287-1330

LD 474 – An Act To Clarify the Authority of a County To Fund Its County Communications Center through the County Tax or Fee-for-service Agreements. (Sponsored by Rep. Blanchard of Old Town; additional cosponsors.)

(continued on page 8)

HOPPER (cont'd)

This resolution would send out to the voters a proposed constitutional amendment that would require all real and personal property in Maine to be assessed at its "current use" value.

HEARINGS (cont'd)

LD 744 – An Act To Make Technical Changes to the Laws Establishing the Lincoln and Sagadahoc Multicounty Jail Authority. (Emergency) (Sponsored by Sen. Mayo of Sagadahoc Cty; additional cosponsors.)

Taxation

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

Tel: 287-1552

LD 778 – An Act To Exempt the Sale of Electric, Hybrid or Hydrogen-Fueled Vehicles from State Sales Tax and Excise Tax. (Sponsored by Rep. Cressey of Cornish; additional cosponsors.)