



Maine Municipal Association

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To: MMA's Legislative Policy Committee

From: Stephan Bunker, Chair

Re: Notice and Agenda of the January 19, 2012 meeting

Date: January 11, 2012

The next meeting of the Legislative Policy Committee is scheduled for:

Thursday, January 19, 2012
10:00 a.m. – Noon – Subcommittee Meetings
Noon – 12:30 p.m. Lunch
12:30 – 3:00 p.m. – Business Meeting
Maine Municipal Association

The second (short) legislative session formally began on January 4th and is now in full swing. As has been the case for at least the last four years, the state of the State's budget will be the centerpiece discussion in the Capitol over the next four months. The Department of Health and Human Services is facing a serious \$220 million shortfall related to the state's Medicaid program that needs to be brought into balance over the next 18 months. Legislators are having a difficult time getting their arms around the supplemental budget Governor LePage submitted to deal with that shortfall. On top of that supplemental budget, an additional, non-Medicaid supplemental state budget is expected to be submitted by the Governor in late January.

Beyond the budget-based legislation, lawmakers will be dealing with two dozen newly introduced bills that directly impact municipal government as well as several significant "carryover" bills that were presented to the Legislature last year but have been substantially re-worked over the summer and fall as carryover bills and are now in a form that are quite different from the originally-printed version.

To optimize our subcommittee process given the somewhat shorter list of bills that will need to be processed by the full LPC, I am recommending that the Subcommittee on Transportation and State and Local Government and the Subcommittee on Labor, Utilities, Natural Resources and Economic Development to meet together on the 19th and collaboratively review and make recommendations on all bills falling within each subcommittee's jurisdiction.

This meeting will provide us with an opportunity to establish the LPC's position on most of the municipally-related legislation that will be considered this year by the Legislature. It will be a very important meeting and I look forward to seeing you there.

Agenda

I. Housekeeping.

- A. Distribution of LPC Handbook (Attachment #1) and the Executive Committee's "Roles and Responsibilities" Policy (Attachment #2).** At its meeting in September 2011, MMA's Executive Committee discussed the importance of ensuring strong, two-way communication between the Executive Committee and the Legislative Policy Committee. Part of that discussion included a review of a "Roles and Responsibilities" document that was adopted by the Executive Committee about 15 years ago which emphasizes the importance of full communication between these two committees within the Association. To enhance that type of communication, the Executive Committee wanted to make sure the LPC was provided that document to complement the LPC Handbook. *No action necessary.*
- B. Proposed February and March meeting dates (if necessary).** If the LPC needs to be convened in February and March, staff is recommending those meeting dates as Thursday, February 16 and Thursday, March 15, respectively. *The LPC will be asked to approve those meeting dates.*
- C. Question regarding e-mail surveys of the LPC.** A member has suggested that when the LPC is surveyed by e-mail for the purpose of establishing the Association's position on a bill, the e-mail should provide an opportunity for members to "reply to all" for the purpose of obtaining more information or sharing ideas before staking out an actual opinion. In the past, some members have complained about that practice because it can lead to many incoming e-mail messages and extended e-mail conversations. *The LPC will be asked if e-mail surveys should be distributed with the "reply to all" capacity.*

II. Proposed Legislation. A summary description of each bill subject to LPC review is provided in MMA's "LD List 2012 plus carryovers" (Attachment #3).

- A. The LPC Subcommittee on Taxation & Education** will provide recommendations for full LPC consideration on the following legislative initiatives.
- i. Consent agenda items, if any.
 - ii. Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry-related legislation
 1. LD 1534 (carryover) – Resolve, To Reform the Land Use and Planning Authority in the Unorganized Territories.

2. LD 1649 – An Act To Authorize the Registration of Farmland in 2012 and 2013.
3. LD 1741 – An Act To Streamline the Paperwork Requirements of the State’s Forest Practices Laws.
4. ... Plus, legislation that was printed after this agenda was distributed.

iii. Appropriations & Financial Affairs-related legislation

1. LD 1746 – An Act To Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government and To Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2012 and June 30, 2013.
2. ... Plus, legislation that was printed after this agenda was distributed.

iv. Education & Cultural Affairs-related legislation

1. LD 1668 – An Act To Improve the Regional School Unit Budget Approval and Validation Process.
2. LD 1696 – An Act To Modify the Alternative Organizational Structure Budget Approval Process.
3. LD 1762 – An Act To Amend and Clarify the Public Charter School Law.
4. ... Plus, legislation that was printed after this agenda was distributed.

v. Taxation-related legislation

1. LD 1138 (carryover) – An Act To Prevent Unnecessary Expulsion of Landowners from the Maine Tree Growth Tax Law Program.
2. LD 1653 – An Act To Make Fisheries and Wildlife Projects Eligible for Tax Increment Financing.
3. LD 1680 – An Act To Amend the Circuitbreaker Program To Include Claimants Occupying Property Pursuant to a Trust and To Require Proof of Payment of Rent.
4. LD 1693 – An Act To Amend the Law Governing Abatements of Property Taxes for Infirmity or Poverty.

5. LD 1699 – An Act To Create Excise Tax Equity and consistency for Buses.
6. LD 1730 – An Act To Require the Review of Proposed Tax Expenditures.
7. LD 1747 – An Act To Prohibit Municipalities from Imposing Fees on Ice Fishing Shacks.
8. ... Plus, legislation that was printed after this agenda was distributed.

B. The *combined* Subcommittees on Labor, Utilities, Natural Resources and Economic Development & Transportation and State and Local Government will provide recommendations for full LPC consideration on the following legislative initiatives.

i. Consent agenda items, if any.

ii. Energy, Utilities & Technology-related legislation.

1. LD 1614 – An Act To Create Efficiency in E-9-1-1 Call Centers.
2. LD 1676 – An Act To Increase Energy Options.
3. LD 1761 – An Act To Improve and Ensure Adequate Funding for E-9-1-1 Services.
4. ... Plus, legislation that was printed after this agenda was distributed.

iii. Environment & Natural Resources-related legislation.

1. LD 1763 – An Act To Reduce Open Burning in Neighborhoods.
2. ... Plus, legislation that was printed after this agenda was distributed.

iv. Health & Human Services-related legislation.

1. LD 1627 – An Act Regarding the Filing of Birth, Death and Marriage Data.
2. ... Plus, legislation that was printed after this agenda was distributed.

v. Judiciary-related legislation.

1. LD 1465 (carryover) – An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Freedom of Access.
2. LD 1477 (carryover) – Resolve, To Review Issues Dealing with Regulatory Takings.
3. LD 1687 – An Act To Clarify the Liability of 3rd-party Building Inspectors.
4. ... Plus, legislation that was printed after this agenda was distributed.

vi. Labor, Commerce, Research & Economic Development-related legislation.

1. LD 1571 (carryover) – An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Workers' Compensation.
2. LD 1619 – An Act To Resolve Conflicts In the Implementation of the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code.
3. LD 1675 – Resolve, To Establish the Task Force To Facilitate the Development of Unoccupied Mills.
4. LD 1695 – An Act To Provide Additional In-store Space for Maine's Businesses by Removing License and Permit Posting Requirements.
5. LD 1697 – An Act Relating to the Calculation of Population for Purposes of the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code and Public Safety Answering Point Assessments.
6. LD 1725 – An Act To Strengthen the Unemployment Insurance Laws and Reduce Unemployment Fraud.
7. ... Plus, legislation that was printed after this agenda was distributed.

vii. State & Local Government-related legislation.

1. LD 1043 Part FF (carryover) – Proposal in State Budget to eliminate the State Planning Office and reorganize function.
2. LD 1596 – An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Discontinued Town Ways.
3. ... Plus, legislation that was printed after this agenda was distributed.

viii. Transportation-related legislation.

1. LD 1656 – An Act To Clarify the Registration Exemption of Tractors under the Motor Vehicle Laws.
2. LD 1710 – An Act To Amend the Motor Vehicle Laws.
3. LD 1753 – An Act To Improve Transportation in the State.
4. ... Plus, legislation that was printed after this agenda was distributed.

ix. Veterans & Legal Affairs-related legislation.

1. LD 1630 – Resolve, To Establish a Stakeholder Group for the Development of a Plan for the Inventory and Proper Care of Veterans' Graves.
2. LD 1664 – An Act To Amend the Election Laws.
3. ... Plus, legislation that was printed after this agenda was distributed.

III. Adjourn