

Legislative BULLETIN

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March 2, 2001

Here We Go Again

Sales Tax Volatility Expanding Deficit

The state's financial outlook went from bleak to bleaker this week as the Legislature braced for the all-important report of the Revenue Forecasting Committee.

The Revenue Forecasting Committee is a group of state financial experts that determines the revenue projections that the state budget is required, by law, to balance.

Going into the upcoming 2-year budget cycle, the state was facing a \$242 million budget deficit. Governor King's proposed budget absorbed the deficit through a combination of revenue increases, program freezes and program cuts, most of which, by their very nature, are controversial.

After all the legislative committees of jurisdiction had picked apart the Governor's proposal and reported back on their budget priorities, the 2-year deficit had blossomed back to \$161 million.

Into this scenario steps the Revenue Forecasting Committee. Scheduled to execute a re-projection of revenues by March 1, the Committee assembled on Monday this week, but too many questions were raised to complete the re-projection and the group's work was delayed until March 1 and then delayed again to March 5. Amidst these delays, this is what the Appropriations Committee has been told.

Sales tax revenues in Maine are slumping, significantly under-performing projections. At its first cut at the task on February 26, the Forecasting Committee was presented a projection by Maine Revenue Services that pre-

dicted a \$54 million shortfall in sales tax revenue over the remainder of this fiscal year and during the FY 02-03 biennium. Adding-in some relatively minor under-performance in other areas, most notably the estate tax, the new best-guess by MRS would drive

the original deficit from \$242 million to an even \$300 million for the biennium.

But the MRS information raised a number of questions that stalled the

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Taxation Committee Reports Property Tax Relief Bills

Last week's *Legislative Bulletin* described several bills that were being considered by the Taxation Committee. On Tuesday this week the Committee voted out its report on those legislative initiatives. For a more complete description of the bills identified below, please refer to the February 23 edition of the *Bulletin*.

LD 174, An Act to Amend the Determination of Penalty for the Tree Growth Tax Law. This bill would reduce the financial penalty that is applied when property is removed from the Tree Growth Tax Program. Committee Report "Ought Not to Pass".

LD 120, An Act to Increase the Homestead Property Tax Exemption from \$7,000 to \$10,000. The title of this bill speaks for itself. The Committee gave LD 120 an "Ought to Pass" report before tabling the bill for further consideration. The plan is to hold LD 120 as the legislative "vehicle" for any changes the Committee might make to the Homestead exemption program.

Some of the ideas that the Committee kicked around before tabling the bill were to consider a modest increase to the value of the exemption (e.g., \$500) or establish a means-testing system that would govern eligibility for any increased value.

LD 180, An Act to Increase the Homestead Property Tax Exemption. LD 180 would increase the value of the \$7,000 Homestead exemption to \$15,000 and continue to increase it in increments of \$1,000 until it reached a value of \$25,000. Committee Report: "Ought Not to Pass".

LD 261, An Act to Establish the Maine Resident Homestead Property Tax Rebate Program. This bill would increase the value of Homestead-based property tax relief from \$7,000 to \$10,000, but it would also repeal the Homestead exemption, and replace it with a rebate program whereby the homesteaders would pay their full taxes, and then get a check in the mail

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SALES TAX (cont'd)

Forecasting Committee from executing its re-projection. According to the MRS data, sales of automobiles have slowed enough to scale back projected annual revenue increases for that sector from 9% to 5%. If that's the case for automobiles, the Forecasting Committee asked, why not for the other big-ticket items, such as building supplies and appliances, which are typically purchased with the same consumer appetite (or lack of appetite) as are the automobiles. Altogether, cars, building supplies and appliances make up nearly 50% of the sales tax base.

Downsizing projected sales tax growth in an across-the-board way for all big-ticket items from 9% to 5% or 4.5% would expand the budget hole the Legislature is trying to fill by nearly \$100 million.

Over the last 12 years we've been completely through the cycle – from the budget surpluses and the hot economy of the late 1980s through the recession and deep cut-backs of the early 1990s, the extended recovery period, a boost of very low unemployment and state budget surpluses of 1999 and 2000, and now a slumping sales tax performance and budget deficits, again, in the range of several hundreds of million dollars.

It's a roller coaster ride but the Legislature has steadfastly refused to address the volatility of the tax code at all points in the cycle. During the good times, during the bad times...by means of comprehensive change or by means of incremental change...even as the

economy morphs and evolves and transforms itself before our eyes, the state's tax code remains steadfastly impervious to structural change, such is the political will.

A revised picture of the state's budget deficit should be available within the week. (GH)

TAX COMMITTEE (cont'd)

for their property tax rebate from the state. Committee Report: "Ought Not to Pass".

LD 145, An Act to Protect Senior Homeowners. This bill would prohibit a property tax lien foreclosure on a property if the resident-owner is at least 70 years of age and the delinquent taxes are less than 50% of the assessed value of the property. Committee Report: "Ought Not to Pass".

LD 209, An Act to Increase the Amount Transferred through State-municipal Revenue Sharing. This bill

would structurally implement the tax policy initiated during the last legislative session now called "Revenue Sharing II" by increasing the percentage of sales and income tax revenue dedicated to the Local Government Fund from 5.1% to 5.5%, representing an annual bump to revenue sharing of approximately \$8.5 million, which would be distributed according to the Revenue Sharing II formula that gives heightened recognition to communities with relative high property tax rates. Committee Report: Unanimous "Ought to Pass". LD 209 is now slated to go to the Appropriations "Table" where it will ultimately have to compete with perhaps a hundred or more other bills with fiscal notes attached to them.

LD 398, An Act to Allow Municipalities to Determine the Level of Auto Excise Tax. This bill would give municipalities a "local option" to set their own motor vehicle excise tax rates, provided those rates were not greater than the rates established in law. Committee Report: "Ought Not to Pass".

Homestead Exemption Reminder

In the municipal newsletters and shopping note flyers, many municipalities are taking advantage of the month of March to give notice to their residents of the availability of the \$7,000 property tax homestead exemption.

For those new homesteaders who need to be reminded to apply, April 1 is the deadline.

It should be common knowledge that Maine homeowners who are already enrolled in the program do not have to reapply every year. Those folks retain a continuing eligibility for the homestead exemption until their residency situation changes. If they move to another municipality in Maine, they will have to reapply for the exemption in the new town.

For those people who are not enrolled in the program, there are three simple questions to ask.

- Do you own a home in Maine?
- Is it your primary residence?
- Have you been a Maine homeowner for the last 12 months?

Any residents in your community who can answer "yes" to those three questions *and who are not already enrolled in the Homestead exemption program* should be contacting their local assessor, filling out an application, and turning it in by April 1.

Legislative Bulletin

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Subscriptions to the *Bulletin* are available at a rate of \$20 per calendar year. Inquiries regarding subscriptions or opinions expressed in this publication should be addressed to: *Legislative Bulletin*, Maine Municipal Association, 60 Community Drive, Augusta, ME 04330. Tel: 623-8428.

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

Bill Proposes Loans for Dams

On Wednesday this week the Natural Resource Committee held a public hearing on LD 481, *An Act to Modify the Dam Repair and Reconstruction Fund*. Rep. Tom Winsor (Norway) sponsored the bill. He stated that Maine has many older dams that currently need repair. Rep. Winsor's bill would change the administration of the program. Currently, municipalities may apply for a grant from the Dam Repair and Reconstruction Fund administered by the DEP. LD 481 bill would change the state support from a grant to a low-interest loan. The administration of the program would also transfer from DEP to the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management. Rep. Winsor testified that he hoped this bill would make individual or community owners take responsibility for their dams.

Members of the Committee questioned whether loans should be used

for both water quality issues and for safety-related maintenance. Committee members requested more information concerning the condition of many of our dams.

The Deputy Director of Emergency Management testified that the Department did not currently have the capacity to manage a low-interest loan program. Emergency Management also explained that the dams were ranked according to the hazards that they each presented. The majority of the state's dams would be considered a low hazard since they do not threaten the life or property of down-stream users. He would prefer to prioritize the use of the fund and concentrate on those dams that represent a significant hazard.

In its testimony, the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) raised several questions for the Committee members. One of the problematic aspects of the bill is the concept of ownership.

Who will be the borrower? It is easy to determine private ownership if a municipality or a private individual owns the dam, however, if a lake association owns the dam, what shall be an acceptable form of collateral for the loan? FAME suggested that the loan be changed to a loan subsidy program.

Several environmental groups testified in opposition to LD 481. Concerns echoed throughout the hearing were that the bill did not provide for the option of removing the dam. The Coordinator of the Atlantic Salmon Company testified that often it does not make sense for dams in bad repair to remain in place. The funds should be spent to remove them rather than fix them. Another concerns addressed by each of the environmental groups was the failure of the bill to address any form of fish passage. These groups would like to see dams repaired and designed to include fish passage.

The work session for this bill will be held on March 7, at 9:30 a.m. in the Room 437 of the State House. (KH)



From left to right, Limestone Town Manager Gary O' Neal, Fort Kent Town Manager Don Guimond, and Union Town Manger Andrew Hart participate in yesterday's meeting of MMA's Legislative Policy Committee. In a 6-hour session, the LPC staked-out the Association's position on 141 bills. Town Manager O' Neal was the State Representative from Limestone for the 117th, 118th and 119th Legislatures.

'Right to Fish' Bill Would Prohibit Nuisance Suits

The Marine Resources Committee held a public hearing Tuesday on LD 502, *An Act to Create the Right to Fish*. Senator Jill Goldthwait (Hancock Cty.) sponsored LD 502. She testified that it was her intention to create legislation that protects Maine's commercial fishing activities from private nuisance suits brought by citizens that neighbor the fisheries. Commercial fishing industries will be able to avoid nuisance suits, so long as the activity is in compliance with applicable licensing and permitting requirements as well as other statutes, rules and ordinances.

In some respects, the bill closely resembles the Right to Farm Law. The Right to Farm Law prohibits nuisance suits in the event an individual "comes to the nuisance." Senator Goldthwait stated that she would like LD 502 to prohibit nuisance suits against environmentally-compliant commercial fishing activities...period.

MMA was initially opposed to LD 502 with respect to a provision of the printed bill that would preempt municipal ordinances as they may apply to commercial fishing activities. Instead, the Commissioner of Marine Resources would have sole discretion to determine whether a commercial fishing activity was compliant with environmental laws.

In presenting her bill to the Committee, however, Senator Goldthwait provided an amended version of the bill that she hoped the Committee would use as a starting point. The amendment clarifies that the purpose of the bill is focused on private nuisance actions and that the application of municipal ordinances would not be preempted.

Representative David Etnier (Harpwell), a co-sponsor of the legislation, several fishermen, the Maine Lobstermen's Association, and the Maine Farm Bureau all testified in support of the bill.

Several of the fishermen gave the example that neighbors in their communities prefer not to see lobster traps

stored in the public view. These fishermen further testified that they try to be as courteous as possible and have agreed to either remove their traps from the public eye or cover them. Committee member Rep. Deborah McNeil (Rockland) asked if any of these complaints or municipal ordinances had spurred law suits. To date, the industries have not been the subject of a

Underground Storage Tanks

On Wednesday, February 28, the Natural Resource Committee heard testimony on LD 179, *An Act to Protect Sensitive Geologic Areas from Oil Contamination*. Sponsored by Representative Scott Cowger (Hallowell), LD directs the DEP to develop rules to govern the siting of underground petroleum storage tanks (USTs). These rules would be "major substantive rules", which means they will ultimately be reviewed and approved by the Legislature.

In support of the legislation, a representative of the DEP provided the Committee with a short presentation of various sites with leaking USTs. DEP's position is that although the construction of USTs has improved, all of the dangers of underground storage have not been remedied. Of all the USTs registered with DEP, 43% are sited in "sensitive geological areas." These areas include sand and/or gravel aquifers.

The DEP testified that they would like to make the rulemaking process as open to industry and concerned parties as possible. Although not clearly stated in LD 179, DEP testified that the proposed rule-making authority would only apply to USTs sited after the effective date of the rules. The DEP testified that they could have the rules ready for the Committee to review within the next 9-12 months. Senator John Martin (Eagle-Lake) expressed his concern that if the DEP were to take

lawsuit, but they have changed their practices to accommodate the complainants.

The Commissioner of Marine Resources testified in opposition to LD 502 as drafted. After seeing the amendment to the language of the bill, he stated that he would be able to support the bill. Two days after the public hearing, MMA's Legislative Policy Committee reviewed LD 502 as initially amended by its sponsor and voted to support the legislation as amended.

The work session for LD 502 is Tuesday, March 6th, at 1 p.m. in Room 437 of the State House. (KH)

longer than the proposed time to develop the regulations, he would like to see an interim rule put in place.

The Maine Water Utilities Association testified in support of LD 179, as did the Maine Rural Water Association.

The Maine Oil Dealers Association (MODA) and the Maine Petroleum Association (MPA) testified in opposition to LD 179. MODA said that the use and storage of petroleum products can be accomplished safely and no one is more interested in preventing leaks and spills than the oil dealers. MODA said that one of the problems with the bill as written is that it gives the DEP a blank check of authority. MODA would like the legislation to give the DEP the guidance necessary to draft the siting regulations. MPA also expressed concerns with ambiguities and undefined terms in the printed bill.

On March 1, one day after the public hearing, MMA's Legislative Policy Committee voted to support LD 179. Historically, the LPC has been supportive of legislation that is protective of Maine's groundwater resources. MMA's only concern was that the DEP authority not be construed as an "implied preemption" of municipal authority to enact stricter UST siting standards if the municipality believes that necessary.

The work session for LD 179 is Wednesday, March 7th, at 9:30 a.m. in Room 437 of the State House. (KH)

(The bill summaries are written by MMA staff and are not necessarily the bill's summary statement or an excerpt from that summary statement. There are many more bills of municipal interest being printed than there is space in the Legislative Bulletin for their description. 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.)

Criminal Justice

LD 946 – An Act to Excuse Animal Control Officers from Attending the Maine Criminal Justice Academy. (Sponsored by Rep. Povich of Ellsworth)

This bill would repeal the requirement that municipal Animal Control Officers obtain certification through a training program conducted by the Department of Agriculture.

LD 1168 – An Act Concerning the Sentencing of Persons to County Jails. (Sponsored by Sen. McAlevy of York County; additional cosponsors)

This bill would establish that county prisoners serve their time in the jail of the county where the crime was committed. This bill would also require that a person whose suspended sentence has been revoked must be sent back to either the state prison or county jail based on the underlying sentence which the person was originally serving rather than the length of the shorter, “probation revocation” sentence, which typically results in that prisoner being routed to the county jails.

Education & Cultural Affairs

LD 1301 – An Act to Implement Changes in Cost-sharing Agreements in School Districts. (Sponsored by Rep. Richard of Madison; additional cosponsors)

This bill implements the recommendations of a school district cost-sharing working group that was formed under the auspices of the State Board of Education. Under current law the participating municipalities within an SAD can implement a cost-sharing formula of the local cost of school operations according to their respective valuations, their respective student counts, or some combination of the two. The process to change that formula involves the creation of a cost-sharing committee made up of three representatives from each participating community which works to develop a recommended change to the formula and ultimately presents that recommendation to the full legislative body of the school district which can either approve or disapprove the recommended cost-sharing change. This bill attempts to address the difficulties that are often associated with that process in the following ways: 1) it requires the Department of Education to provide comprehensive, unbiased cost-sharing information that depicts the participating municipalities' valuations, mill effort toward education, cost expenditure per pupil, etc.; 2) it requires that the cost-sharing committees utilize the services of a facilitator during the process of developing alternative cost-sharing formulas; 3) it authorizes cost-sharing committees to develop formulas that allocate the SAD cost among the participating municipalities according to factors other than valuation and student count, but for those alternative allocation systems to be ultimately adopted for the SAD they have to be approved by a majority vote in each of the participating communities rather than a simple majority vote of the entire SAD voting district; 4) in the circumstance where a recommendation from the cost-sharing committee has been approved to go to the legislative body of the SAD, but the cost-

sharing recommendation was not approved by a majority of those three representatives from each of the participating municipalities (i.e., if at least one town in the SAD is not in favor the proposed change to the cost sharing formula), then a “knowledgeable third party” must be selected by the cost-sharing committee to prepare a written summary of the process to date, prepare an impartial recommendation regarding changing the method of cost-sharing, and present the summary and the recommendations to the cost-sharing committee for its consideration. At the public hearing regarding the cost-sharing committee's recommendation, the “knowledgeable third party's” recommendation will also be presented for the purpose of obtaining public input.

Inland Fisheries and Wildlife

LD 940 – An Act to Improve Funding for Snowmobile Trail Maintenance. (Sponsored by Sen. Mills of Somerset County)

This bill would make three changes to current law, all for the purpose of increasing the amount of revenue available to state snowmobile programs within the Department of Conservation. First, the bill would add \$5 to the cost of a snowmobile registration fee in all categories (resident and non-resident) and dedicate the revenue generated by the \$5 increase to the Department's Recreational Vehicle Division. Second, this bill would discontinue Maine's “reciprocity” with other states and require all non-resident's to register their snowmobiles if operating their machines in Maine. Third, this bill would increase the percentage of gas tax revenues devoted to snowmobile recreation programs from .5% to .8%.

Labor

LD 1205 – An Act to Improve Enforcement of Wage and Hour, Safety and Other Labor Laws. (Sponsored by Sen. Edmonds of Cumberland County; additional cosponsors)

This bill would authorize a representative of a construction labor union to go on the premises of any construction worksite during reasonable hours to inspect that worksite and the records relating to that worksite in investigation of complaints of possible violations of wage and hour, safety or other labor laws.

Legal & Veterans Affairs

LD 1150 – An Act to Prohibit Campaign Signs Within 750 Feet of a Polling Place. (Sponsored by Rep. Jones of Greenville; additional cosponsors)

This bill would require political advertising on election day to be located no closer than 750 feet from the registrar's office or the voting place, rather than the 250 foot minimum under current law.

LD 1250 – An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Registration of Voters. (Sponsored by Rep. Gooley; additional cosponsors)

This bill would require a person to register to vote not later than 30 days before an election.

Natural Resources

LD 1278 – An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Task Force to Study Growth Management. (Reported by Sen. Douglass for the Task Force to Study Growth Management pursuant to Joint Order S.P. 1090)

This bill would implement the recommendations of the task force to study growth management by making several changes to Maine's subdivision law and several appropriations for the purposes of supporting growth management activities. First, this bill would establish that in order to discount the subdivider's residential lot from a subdivision, it must have been the subdivider's “principal

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HOPPER (cont'd)

residence” for at least a period of five years prior to the subdivision. Second, this bill would establish that in order to exclude a “ gift lot” to a relative from subdivision review, the lot must have been in the ownership of the person making the gift conveyance at least five years before the subdivision. Third, this bill would provide that a subdivided lot that is conveyed to an abutter shall not be discounted from the subdivision law if that subdivided lot (without all the rest of the merged real estate) is subsequently reconveyed to a third party within five years of the subdivision. Fourth, this bill would clarify that municipalities have home rule authority to establish subdivision regulations that are “ stricter” than Maine subdivision law. Finally, with respect to statutory changes, this bill would prohibit a municipal subdivision ordinance from requiring “ more restrictive” minimum lot size standards for subdivided lots than are required for lots that may be created outside of the subdivision regulations. In addition this bill would appropriate \$26.8 million over the biennium for a variety of growth management related purposes. Approximately \$2.8 million would be appropriated over the biennium in order to develop, coordinate and maintain a regionally based geographic information system (GIS) and to assist regional councils and municipalities in the development of use of GIS systems for tracking patterns of development. \$4 million would be appropriated for the State Planning Office to provide for planning and implementation grants, comprehensive plan updates, smart growth initiatives, pilot projects, grants for financial and technical assistance to municipalities and grants for regional councils. Finally, \$20 million would be appropriated to capitalize the Municipal Investment Trust Fund.

LD 1293 – An Act to Ban the Sale of Fever Thermometers that Contain Mercury. (Sponsored by Rep. Bull of Freeport; additional cosponsors)

This bill would prohibit the sale or transfer from one person to another of mercury fever thermometers in this state.

State and Local Government

LD 1176 – An Act to Require the State to Purchase the initial Flags That are Required for Veterans’ Grave Sites. (Sponsored by Rep. Hatch of Skowhegan; additional cosponsors)

This bill would require the State Purchasing Agent to provide, upon written request of the municipal officers, on American Flag for each veteran’ s grave subject to the requirement under current law that municipalities decorate each one of those graves on Memorial Day. The distribution of the flags would be a one-time provision.

LD 1218 – An Act to Amend the Calculation for Annual County Tax Assessments. (AFTER DEADLINE) (Sponsored by Rep. Dorr of Camden; additional cosponsors)

Under current law the apportionment of the county tax among the various municipalities within the county is assessed entirely according to municipal valuation. This bill would change the apportionment by separately apportioning the cost of the non-contracted rural sheriff patrol services among the municipalities in reasonable proportion to the degree those services are provided to the respective communities.

LD 1287 – An Act Concerning the Administration of County Government. (Sponsored by Sen. Davis; additional cosponsors)

This bill makes three changes to the laws governing county government. First, this bill repeals a provision of law that requires a substantial reduction in the pay of county commissioners in counties that hire a county administrator. Second, this bill would establish the same probationary periods for county employees as those that apply for municipal employees. Third, the bill gives county commissioners discretion at the beginning of the fiscal year in determining what portion of the surplus funds may be used to reduce the tax levy.

Taxation

LD 1248 – An Act to Bring Equity to the Vehicle Excise Tax. (Sponsored by Rep. Gooley of Farmington; additional cosponsors)

This bill would establish that the motor vehicle excise tax is assessed against the purchase price rather than the manufacturer’ s suggested retail price of the motor vehicle.

Transportation

LD 1272 – An Act to Allow Fire Police constables to use Roof-mounted Emergency Lights. (Sponsored by Rep. Usher; additional cosponsors)

This bill would allow fire police constables who are used for traffic and crowd control at the scene of an emergency to use permanently roof-mounted flashing red signal lights while at the scene of the fire or other emergency.

LD 1275 – An Act to Exempt 100% Disabled Veterans from Paying the Excise Tax and Registration Fee on Motor Vehicles. (Sponsored by Rep. Murphy of Berwick)

This bill would exempt 100% disabled veterans from the motor vehicle excise tax and registration fee requirements.

LD 1285 – An Act to Make Supplemental Highway 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, 2002 and June 30, 2003. (Emergency) (Sponsored by Sen. Savage of Knox County; additional cosponsors)

This bill is the so-called “ Part 2” Highway Budget Bill. Among other appropriations and changes to law in this bill is the proposed \$8.00 increase to motor vehicle and trailer title fees from \$15 to \$23 for the purpose of raising revenue to help bridge the deficit in the Highway Fund budget.

Utilities and Energy

LD 570 – An Act to Remove Redundant Written Authorization Requirements. (Sponsored by Rep. Colwell of Gardiner; additional cosponsors)

Under current law, no public utility, water district, sanitary district or utility company of any kind may install services to any lot or dwelling unit in a subdivision or a shoreland area without written authorization from the municipality that the subdivision or shoreland development has been approved by the appropriate local authority. This bill would require such a written authorization only from the first utility company seeking to install service. Other utility companies could install their services after the first without obtaining written authorization.

LD 934 – An Act to Allow Timely Public Comment on Matters Heard Before Sanitary Districts. (Sponsored by Sen. Rand of Cumberland)

This bill would require all sewer or sanitary district boards of trustees to hold a public hearing before making any decision on budgets, expenditures, expansions, reconfiguration of sewer systems, moratoriums on expansion of service, the preclusion or delay of any services or the cessation of service to any properties.

LD 959 – An Act to Change the Assessment for Sprinkler Systems to Per-use basis. (Sponsored by Rep. Michael of Auburn)

This bill would require that water rates assessed by a water utility with respect to private fire protection systems (including private hydrants, automatic sprinkler systems, standpipes, etc.) must be based on actual metered water use rather than demand capacities.

LD 1045 – An Act to Ban the Permitting or Expansion of Existing Sewage Outfalls into the Ocean. (Sponsored by Rep. Murphy of Kennebunk)

This bill would prohibit a sanitary district from building or expanding a sewage outfall into the ocean.

LEGISLATIVE HEARINGS

NOTE: You should check your newspapers for Legal Notices as there may be changes in the hearing schedule. Weekly schedules and supplements are available at the Senate Office at the State House and at the Legislature's web site at <http://janus.state.me.us/legis>. If you would like to be notified by e-mail of updates to the schedule and web page, send your name, e-mail address, and a message that includes " ANPH UPDATE" to the Senate Webmaster at webmaster_senate@state.me.us.

Monday, March 5

Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

Room 206, Cross State Office Building, 1:30 p.m.

Tel. 287-1338

LD 514 – An Act to Require Public Access to All State Waters. (Sponsor: Morrison)

Natural Resources

Room 437, State House, 1:30 p.m.

Tel. 287-4149

LD 821 – An Act to Promote the Recycling of Household Batteries. (Sponsor: Sullivan)

LD 828 – An Act to Encourage Proper Disposal of Propane Tanks. (Sponsor: O' Neil)

LD 1105 – An Act to Reduce the Cost of Disposal for Municipalities and Encourage the Recycling of Electronic Equipment. (Sponsor: Hawes)

LD 1031 – An Act to Fund the Cleanup of Illegal Dumping Sites. (Sponsor: Dunlap)

State & Local Government

Room 216, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.

Tel. 287-1330

LD 562 – An Act to Allow Municipalities to Create Capital Improvement Districts. (Sponsor: Andrews)

LD 568 – An Act to Improve Local Government Unit Access to Bulk Purchasing. (Sponsor: Mitchell, C)

Taxation

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

Tel. 287-1552

LD 617 – An Act to Require Property Tax Payments on Conservation Easements and Development Rights Purchased After October 1, 2001. (Sponsor: Glynn)

LD 631 – An Act to Require that All Owners Sign a Notice of Intent to Harvest for Land Subject to the Maine Tree Growth Tax Law. (Sponsor: Brooks)

LD 635 – Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Value All Land Based on Its Current Use. (Sponsor: Foster)

LD 657 – An Act to Exempt Individuals Who are 65 Years of Age or Older and Meet Income Requirements from Increases in Property Taxes. (Sponsor: Andrews)

LD 693 – An Act to Reduce Property Taxes. (Sponsor: Michael)

LD 710 – An Act to Authorize Towns to Give Tax Breaks to Volunteer Firefighters. (Sponsor: Murphy, E)

LD 765 – An Act to Establish a Municipal Reimbursement Formula for Current Use Taxation Programs. (Sponsor: Etnier)

LD 496 – An Act to Amend the Maine Revenue-sharing Formula.

(Sponsor: Lemont)

Transportation

Room 126, State House, 1:30 p.m.

Tel. 287-4148

LD 492 – An Act to Reimburse Communities that have Constructed Sand and Salt Sheds and are Rated Priority 1 or 2. (Sponsor: Nutting, J)

LD 493 – An Act to Require the Department of Transportation to Coordinate with Municipalities Regarding Landscaping and Planting. (Sponsor: Gagnon)

LD 507 – An Act to Provide Property Tax Relief from the Cost of Public Transportation. (Sponsor: Marley)

LD 595 – Resolve, to Allocate Funds to the Department of Transportation for the Construction of a 2nd Bridge in Skowhegan. (Sponsor: Hatch)

Tuesday, March 6

Appropriations & Financial Affairs

Room 28, State House

Tel. 287-1635

9:00 a.m.

REPORT: Revenue Reprojection (Grant Pennoyer, OFPR)

10:00 a.m.

Committee Revenue Reprojection Discussion

Criminal Justice

Cushnoc Auditorium, Augusta Civic Center, 9:30 a.m.

Tel. 287-1122

LD 186 – An Act to Exempt from Concealed Firearms Permit Requirements of Other States Allowed to Carry Concealed Firearms. (Sponsor: Glynn)

LD 267 – An Act to Repeal the Requirement That a Person Have a Permit for Concealed Firearms. (Sponsor: Tracy)

LD 259 – An Act to Offer Reciprocity Concerning Concealed Firearms Permits. (Sponsor: Perkins)

LD 806 – An Act to Amend the Concealed Firearms Laws. (Sponsor: McAlevey)

Education & Cultural Affairs

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

Tel. 287-3125

LD 621 – An Act to Protect a Child's Right to Bike and Walk to School. (Sponsor: Cowger)

Labor

Room 220, Cross State Office Building, 9:30 a.m.

Tel. 287-1333

LD 380 – An Act to Restore an Injured Employee's Right to Sue an Employer for Damages. (Sponsor: Pineau)

Legal & Veterans Affairs

Room 436, State House, 10:00 a.m.

Tel. 287-1310

LD 623 – An Act to Require Election Law Training to Voter Registrars and Clerks. (Sponsor: Tessier)

LD 729 – An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Presidential Primaries. (Sponsor: Tessier)

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State & Local Government

Room 216, Cross State Office Building, 9:00 a.m.

Tel. 287-1330

LD 372 – An Act to Clarify Municipal Authority Over Cable Television Franchises. (Sponsor: Berry, D.)

LD 639 – An Act to Require Notification to All Property Owners in a Municipality of a Zoning Change Made by That Municipality. (Sponsor: Foster) (By Request)

LD 769 – An Act to Change the Job Title of County Administrator to County Manager for York County. (Sponsor: McAlevey)

LD 832 – An Act to Clarify Mutual Aid Agreements Between Law Enforcement Agencies. (Sponsor: Duplessie)

LD 866 – An Act to Amend the Budget Process for Sagadahoc County. (Sponsor: Lessard)

Taxation

Room 127, State House, 9:30 a.m.

Tel. 287-1552

LD 144 – An Act to Reduce the Tax on Gasoline. (Sponsor: Snowe-Mello)

LD 697 – Resolve, Decreasing the Gasoline Tax by 10 Cents Per Gallon. (Emergency) (Sponsor: Cressey)

LD 577 – An Act to Create Equitable Taxation of Leased Property. (Sponsor: Colwell)

Wednesday, March 7

Criminal Justice

Room 211, Cross State Office Building, 9:30 a.m.

Tel. 287-1122

LD 677 – An Act to Change the Deadline for the Reporting of a Pilot Project Regarding Ambulance Drivers. (Emergency) (Sponsor: Bull)

1:00 p.m.

LD 607 – An Act to Amend the Tax Expenditure Review Process. (Sponsor: Gagnon)

Transportation

Room 126, State House, 1:30 p.m.

Tel. 287-4148

LD 743 – An Act to Authorize Citizen-issued Citations for Violations of the Handicapped Parking Laws. (Sponsor: Clough)

Thursday, March 8

Utilities & Energy

Room 209, Cross State Office Building, 1:30 p.m.

Tel. 287-4143

LD 620 – An Act to Amend the Charter of the Gray Water District. (Sponsor: Foster)

LD 904 – An Act to Amend the Charter of the Corinna Water District. (Emergency) (Sponsor: Tobin J)

LD 662 – An Act to Remove Barriers to Providing Natural Gas Services. (Sponsor: O' Gara)

Friday, March 9

Natural Resources

Room 437, State House, 9:30 a.m.

Tel. 287-4149

LD 824 – An Act to Provide Free Access to Any Great Pond Controlled by a Dam. (Sponsor: Clark)

LD 527 – An Act to Amend Certain Laws Administered by the Department of Environmental Protection. (Sponsor: Cowger)

LD 787 – An Act to Require the filing of Soils Tests. (Sponsor: Goldthwait)