

The FOAA Balancing Act

The Judiciary Committee held public hearings this week on a number of bills that would amend Maine’s Freedom of Access Act, also referred to as the “Right to Know” law. One of these bills, LD 1465, *An Act to Amend the Law Governing Freedom of Access*, was of major concern to Maine’s municipalities (along with various other public entities in the state). The sidebar on page 2 details how LD 1465 would amend Maine’s Freedom of Access Act in numerous and significant ways.

Here’s how the public hearing went down.

The Introduction. Senator Richard Rosen of Bucksport introduced LD 1465 to the Committee.

Sen. Rosen indicated that the bill was about one thing – expanding the public’s right to know in order to provide taxpayers with peace of mind. The Senator explained that this legislation was loosely modeled after the Right to Know laws in Texas. The Senator concluded his introduction of the bill by identifying the goal of this legislation as allowing the public greater government transparency and accountability.

When posed with a question from a Committee member about the perceived tight timeframes embodied in the bill and their potential impact on government, Sen. Rosen acknowledged the need to balance the protection of the public’s right to know with the activity of certain individuals that may want to take advantage of the law for no reason other than to harass government. When assessing this balance, Sen. Rosen felt there is a greater obligation to protect the public’s right to access of public information.

Next up was a co-sponsor of the bill, Senator Dawn Hill (York County). Sen.

Hill said this bill recognized the importance of open government and would increase government transparency. Her claim was that the time for greater transparency in Maine is now, although she thought this bill could be sent to the Right to Know Advisory Committee in order to achieve that mission.

Working the Committee. The Com-

mittee asked that an attendee of the public hearing walk the Committee members through the bill. The Director of Communications of the Maine Heritage Policy Center did just that by identifying each section of the bill and providing a quick synopsis of what the section intended to do. At that juncture of the public hearing,

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Here Today, Gone Tomorrow: School Non-Consolidation Penalties

The April 15 edition of the *Legislative Bulletin* detailed the public hearings and first work session on four bills designed to do away with the financial penalties that are applied to school systems not in compliance with the school consolidation law first enacted in 2007 and modified every year since.

The testimony provided at the public hearings was strongly supportive of the bills and unrelentingly negative with respect to the penalty-based system that the previous Administration and previous two Legislatures used to cajole compliance with the consolidation requirements.

Along with the supporters of these bills, MMA’s Legislative Policy Committee is no fan of forcing governance changes at the threat of penalty. In 2007, MMA had significant problems with the way the school consolidation law was developed and implemented and offered an incentive-based approach as an alternative. That plan was immediately killed by the Legislature.

With that said, MMA’s position on the four bills to end all school non-consolidation penalties was more nu-

anced than the supporters’ approach. In fact, MMA opposed the bills unless the legislation would also allow for some sort of reconsideration process for all the compliant consolidators in recognition of the fact that dozens upon dozens of school reorganization decisions were made across the state with the understanding that the penalty system was for real and not just an empty and temporary threat.

At its first work session, the Education Committee whittled down the four similar bills to just two: LD 139, *An Act to Eliminate the Penalty for Schools That Did Not Reorganize*, sponsored by Rep. Peter Edgecomb of Caribou, and LD 385, *An Act to Amend the School Administrative Unit Consolidation Laws*, sponsored by Rep. Pete Johnson of Greenville.

On Tuesday this week, the Committee voted near-unanimously “ought to pass as amended” on LD 385. As amended by Committee, the bill would eliminate all penalties for failing to comply with the school consolidation law, beginning not with the next school year (FY 2012) but with the FY 2013 school year and

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FOAA (cont'd)

the flood gates were opened.

The Requesters. A number of individuals spoke in favor of LD 1465 including representatives from the Maine Heritage Policy Center, the Maine Civil Liberties Union, the Freedom of Information Coalition, the Maine Association of Broadcasters, Maine's Chapter of Americans for Prosperity, the Maine Press Association, a business owner and a handful of concerned citizens. These proponents of the bill shared a unified message of the need for better access to public information in a more timely fashion.

Along those same lines, a few comments mentioned at the hearing included:

- Laws should ensure that politics never trump the people's right to know;
- A representative government must be open and accessible to be legitimate in the eyes of the people;
- Specific deadlines for responding to information requests improve the process; and
- If government has nothing to hide, it shouldn't have a problem with complying with a legitimate FOAA request.

Although the message was generally uniform among the proponents, there was some division in the ranks about whether the timelines/deadlines in the printed bill were manageable for all governmental entities, and whether the bill should or should not be vetted by the Right to Know Advisory Committee, which is a balanced group of press and government interests specifically established to review legislation affecting the FOAA. One supporter of LD 1465 suggested that a "one size fits all" approach to the timelines would not

work for the smaller public entities and felt that the timeline portions of the bill should be referred to the Right to Know Advisory Committee for review and recommendations. Other supporters, including the Maine Civil Liberties Union and the Maine Press Association were silent on this issue, presumably supporting all the mandates in the bill as printed.

The Requested. The opponents to LD 1465 included a representative for the Maine School Boards Association and School Superintendents Association, the Maine State Housing Authority, Maine Municipal Association, the Maine County Commissioners Association, a town manager, a county administrator, a county commissioner and a registrar of deeds.

This unified message from the other side of the issue included the following concerns:

- The need for the Right to Know Advisory Committee to weigh in on this bill before legislative action is taken;

- The unrealistic and unmanageable timelines this bill would establish by the use of the term "immediate;"

- The fact that public officials would be *per se* violators of the FOAA for simply being unable to comply with unreasonable response mandates;

- The requirement that public entities provide documents in formats unavailable to them and easily manipulated by the recipient;

- The significant added expense to public entities in order to comply with the FOAA requests is an unfunded state mandate;

- The bill does nothing to provide for the efficient management of the sweeping, large-scale FOAA requests that are increasingly being made;

- and the unreasonable prohibition on inquiring about the purpose of a request in order to clarify the issue being researched.

Other voices heard. A few others testified neither for nor against LD 1465.

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What Would LD 1465 Require?

LD 1465 would: (1) require notices of public meetings to be provided at least 3 days prior to the meeting; (2) create an affirmative duty for a governmental entity to provide copies of public records to people at their request rather than just providing an opportunity to examine those records; (3) provide the requestor with the right to obtain the copies of those records in all available formats, such as by photocopy or electronic or magnetic formats if available; (4) create a duty for the governmental entity to explore obtaining assistance at a reasonable cost, to be borne by the requestor, so that the public record can be provided in the requested medium; (5) require the public records to be mailed if so requested at a mailing charge no greater than actual mailing costs; (6) require all records requested to be immediately provided unless the records have to undergo redaction or are not in public use or are in storage; (7) require a certification be provided to the requestor if there will be any delay in immediately providing the public record and further provide the requestor with the right to copy or inspect the record within 5 business days or have the records mailed or e-mailed within that period of time; (8) create a special standard for "large or multiple requests" which allows for the records to be provided as they become available if they cannot be provided "in the exercise of due diligence" within the 5-day period; (9) require a cost estimate to be provided within 3 business days for any request that may exceed \$100 in costs calculated at the maximum \$10 per hour rate allowed under current law for searching for, retrieving and compiling requested records; (10) treat any failure to comply with the established response-time schedule to be considered a denial of the request and subject to enforcement procedures; (11) establish a 10-day period of time for a requestor to complete an inspection of records being reviewed, with extension periods provided according to a certain process; (12) prohibit a governmental entity from inquiring as to the purpose of a FOAA request; and (13) require every governmental agency to designate a "public access officer" who must be certified to the FOAA according to the same certification program now required of various elected officials. The public access officer is charged with overseeing that governmental agency's response to FOAA requests.

Legislative Bulletin

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Editorial Staff: Greg Connors, Kate Dufour, Geoff Herman, and Laura Veilleux of the State & Federal Relations staff.

My Bad or Your Bad? General Assistance and Program Accountability

On Tuesday this week, 35 people joined the Health and Human Services Committee to debate the merits (or lack thereof) of four bills seeking to improve the municipal General Assistance (GA) program. Although all of the participants agreed that more accountability was needed, they sharply disagreed with respect to whether GA clients or GA administrators needed to be held more accountable.

The debate over client-versus-administrator accountability was aired through the testimony provided on four public assistance related bills. Two of the bills addressed at Tuesday's hearing were advanced at the request of municipal officials. Great thanks are owed to Representative Meredith Strang Burgess (Cumberland) for sponsoring LD 539 on behalf of MMA and Rep. Andre Cushing (Hampden) for sponsoring LD 1370 on behalf of the Maine Welfare Directors Association (MWDA).

- LD 539 – *An Act to Build Accountability into the General Assistance Laws*, sponsored by Rep. Meredith Strang Burgess of Cumberland. This bill would establish that both initial and repeat applicants who through their own actions such as by fraud, misrepresentation, or violating program rules cause the loss of an otherwise available resource (i.e., housing, supplemental food program, counseling, etc.), or who refuse to use an available resource, would become ineligible to receive GA to replace the forfeited or abandoned resource for a period of time.

- LD 1039 – *Resolve, to Create a Working Group to Make Recommendations to Improve the Efficiency, Accountability and Proper Administration of Municipal General Assistance Programs*, sponsored by Rep. Margaret Rotundo of Lewiston. This bill creates and directs a nine member working group to examine the municipal administration of the GA program.

- LD 1370 – *An Act to Amend the Laws Governing General Assistance Programs*, sponsored by Rep. Andre Cushing of Hampden. The bill proposes several amendments to GA laws for the

purpose of making both the administration of the program and the applicants who receive assistance more accountable to the state and local taxpayers who fund the program. For example, one of the changes would require Maine Resident Property Tax and Rent Rebate Program (Circuit Breaker) benefits to be counted as income in the calculation of the level of GA benefits provided. Under existing law, that cash benefit cannot be considered as household income.

- LD 1431 – *An Act to Establish Standards for the Administration of General Assistance Programs*, sponsored by Rep. Peter Stuckey of Portland. LD 1431 requires all municipal officials administering the GA program be certified by the Department of Health and Human Services to perform that function. The bill also mandates GA administrators to maintain electronic records of all applications and all dispositions on GA cases, and actively assist any applicant potentially eligible for federal supplemental social security disability benefits by completing applications, arranging for medical assessments, and obtaining legal representation for the individual.

Advocates for Greater Administrator Accountability (AA)

Generally, the proponents of “Administrator Accountability” (AA) supported LDs 1039 and 1431 and opposed LDs 539 and 1370. The long list of the AA proponents included the Maine Council of Churches, Statewide Homelessness Coalition, Maine People’s Alliance, Roman Catholic Bishop, United Way of Greater Portland, Bangor Homeless Shelter, Maine Women’s Lobby, Preble Street Resources, Maine Affordable Housing, Maine Community Action Programs, Maine Center for Economic Policy, Maine Chapter of Social Workers, Pine Tree Legal Assistance and Maine Equal Justice Partners.

The message provided by these proponents focused on the problems associated with the variation in the delivery of GA benefits from community to community. These proponents generally believe that before the client accountability provisions proposed in LDs 539 and

1370 can be enacted, all municipalities must provide GA in a standardized and equitable fashion. For this reason, the AA proponents strongly supported efforts to study the delivery of GA as proposed in LD 1039 and the certification of GA administrators as proposed in LD 1431.

The Health and Welfare Directors from the cities of Bangor and Portland also offered testimony similar to that provided by the AA proponents. Shawn Yardley of Bangor and Doug Gardner of Portland believe that a properly functioning system must not only hold clients more accountable for their actions, but also improve state oversight of the program and provide for the standardized delivery of GA benefits from municipality to municipality. For these reasons, neither municipal official could support the client accountability bills (LDs 539 and 1370), believing the program review and certification requirements found in LD 1039 and LD 1431 would achieve the necessary outcomes.

Advocates for Greater Client Accountability (CA)

Despite enduring well over an hour of demoralizing and largely unsubstantiated criticisms of the local-level administration of the GA program offered by low-income advocates, GA administrator Dorothy Meagher of Auburn, Sue Charron of Lewiston and Stacey Parra of Rockport provided testimony in favor of LD 539 and LD 1370.

These municipal administrators believe that proposals holding applicants accountable for their own actions would provide a good alternative for addressing the concerns raised by the proponents of the bills establishing arbitrary residency or waiting period requirements. Rather than making people wait for assistance, these municipal officials believe that assistance should be provided only to those that abide by program rules, regulations and standards. By infusing more personal accountability into the system, it is possible that GA administrators will be able to garner greater taxpayer comfort with the program and ensure that the state’s neediest residents receive the assistance

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Half Empty or Half Full: Removing Bottles from the Redemption System

On Friday, April 15, the Environment and Natural Resources Committee heard from proponents and opponents of numerous bills amending Maine's bottle redemption law. Two of these bills were of particular interest to municipalities as they remove certain beverage containers from the state's bottle redemption program and put them into the municipal solid waste stream. LD 1324 proposes removing bottles containing more than 28 fluid ounces from the state's bottle redemption program. The other bill, LD 1417, exempts wine bottles from the state's bottle redemption system.

Twisting off the cap. Representative Kerri Prescott of Topsham introduced LD 1324, *An Act to Create Consistency and Fairness in Maine's Bottle Bill*. Rep. Prescott made it clear she supports the bottle bill's goals of reducing litter along Maine's roadways and encouraging recycling. It was the Representative's opinion that LD 1324 did not affect these goals because the large beverage containers defined in LD 1324 were never part of the litter along the state's roadsides. She also argued that these large beverage containers only account for 10% of the total number of containers returned as part of the redemption system and by removing these containers from the system, the bill would increase efficiencies by reducing the number of different "sorts" at redemption centers and by reducing the amount of space distributors will need to make available on their trucks when collecting recycled containers from redemption centers.

Representative Stacey Fitts from Pittsfield introduced the other bill, LD 1417. Rep. Fitts gave a brief history of the bottle bill and when wine bottles were added to the mix. He then went on to say that wine bottles should be treated for redemption purposes as the commodity that they are - glass bottles, like a mayonnaise jar. When asked by a Committee member, Rep. Fitts indicated he hadn't checked with his local transfer station as to what they

thought the impact would be on their operations but then went on to explain that the Town of Pittsfield was a heavy recycler that produces positive net results from recycling activities, and would take anything they could get.

Imbibing. It was a day long process as many proponents and many more opponents showed up to testify in front of the Committee.

Getting the party started was the Director of Quality Assurance and Regulations at the Department of Agriculture. This division within the Department administers the bottle bill by somehow registering beverage containers in Maine. The Director supported LD 1324 but suggested the threshold be changed to bottles containing more than 64 fluid ounces instead of the 28 fluid ounce standard in the bill.

The Department was "neither for nor against" LD 1417.

Proponents included soft drink manufacturers, distributors and their lobbyists. The concerns of the beverage industry were associated with alleged inefficiencies in the bottle redemption system. It was felt that having two parallel systems for many of the recycling efforts did not make sense. They want to improve efficiencies and be more environmentally friendly by excluding these larger beverage containers, as defined in LD 1324, from their truckloads of returnables and to put those into the municipal solid waste system that has consistently improved its operational effectiveness over the years. By not optimizing their load of recyclables under the current system due to these containers mentioned in the two bills, more trucks were on the road more often, causing increased fuel consumption.

There was also talk about wanting to work with MMA and the municipal recycling groups in order to make sure the proposed shift in recycling responsibilities would be of value to all parties involved. Along those lines, a study prepared by Planning Decisions, Inc., which was commissioned by a long list

of associations including Maine Beer and Wine Distributors Association and the Maine Beverage Association, was presented to the Committee. In this interim analysis, Planning Decisions' analyst Chuck Lawton determined that it costs less to handle large beverage containers and wine bottles at the municipal level than it does in the current container redemption system. According to Planning Decisions' estimates and assumptions, it is feasible that the net cost to Maine municipalities of moving these bottles from a redemption system to a recycling system would be zero.

The municipalities aren't swallowing this analysis. Opponents included representatives from redemption centers of all shapes and sizes, recycling companies, beneficiaries of bottle drives and the Maine Municipal Association, Maine Resource Recovery Association and the Natural Resources Council of Maine. Reasons for the opposition included: (1) the bottle bill is a very successful recycling program with a consistent recycling rate of between 85% and 95%; (2) concern that by removing certain beverage containers from the bottle bill litter would increase along Maine's roadsides; and (3) grave concern over the cost that would be transferred to municipalities and the property taxpayers as opposed to the users and distributors of the products.

Testimony was also provided regarding an analysis conducted by the Product Policy Institute documenting that in 2008 the net cost to municipalities in Ontario which recycle plastic soda, juice and water bottles was approximately \$25 million annually. Glass containers fared no better. The study showed that net cost in excess of \$12 million. The only container providing a recycling profit according to that study was aluminum cans.

The Next Swig. After taking all morning and the early part of the afternoon to hear from all parties, the public hearing was finally closed on LD 1324 and 1417. The Committee has not scheduled a work session yet but it will most likely occur in early May. Bottoms up.

So Near and Yet So Far: How a Bill Almost Becomes a Law

On March 16, the State and Local Government Committee voted unanimously “ought to pass” on LD 497, *An Act to Amend the Powers and Duties of Municipal Treasurers*.

As provided in state statute, municipal officers are authorized to adopt written policies that allow disbursement of employee wages and benefits, municipal education costs or fees collected on behalf of the state by a warrant signed by one or more municipal officers (i.e., boards of selectmen or council). Absent these exceptions (or a provision of municipal charter), funds can be disbursed only by a warrant signed by a majority of the municipal officers.

These exceptions enable the municipal officers to assure that disbursements can be made on a timely basis, as an action of the majority of the municipal officers is normally taken during regularly scheduled selectman’s meetings. If for example the municipal officers only meet on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, the fees collected on behalf of a state agency in the previous month are held by the community for two to three weeks.

As sponsored by Rep. Jeffery Gifford of Lincoln, LD 497 would allow these policies to remain in effect until amended or revoked by vote of the municipal officers, rather than renewed annually, as required in existing law. The title of the bill is misleading. The legislation has nothing to do with the powers of the municipal treasurer.

Based on the Committee’s unanimous recommendation on LD 497, the bill was placed on both the House and Senate consent calendars, officially enacted by the Legislature on March 31 and sent to the Governor for his signature.

A done deal, right?

Actually, no.

On April 12, State and Local Government Committee Chair, Senator Doug Thomas (Somerset County) caused LD 497 to be “recalled from the Governor’s desk”. On Tuesday, this week (April 26th), both chambers, House and Senate, voted to “indefinitely postpone” LD 497, killing the bill.

Given the fact that LD 497 initially

received a unanimous vote of support by both the members of the State and Local Government Committee and the members of the Legislature, municipal officials are confused by the complete reversal.

When asked why, Sen. Thomas stated that the Governor had requested that the Legislature reconsider its vote on LD 497.

According to Governor’s office representative, Jonathan Nass, Governor LePage believes that the bill shifts too much fiduciary responsibility from the boards of selectmen to municipal employees. The Governor also believes that the enacted policies should be reviewed annually and adopted by the municipal officers.

There seems to be a fair amount of confusion regarding this issue.

While we appreciate the Governor’s concern, neither the existing warrant statute nor LD 497 shifts warrant-signing authority to municipal employees, such as clerks or treasurers. Instead, existing law has long allowed for one member of the selectboard to sign a warrant dispersing school revenues or employee wages for obvious reasons of expediency. Most re-

cently, the authority to establish that policy was expanded to expedite the delivery of revenues to the state that are collected at the municipal level. MMA supported that change at the state’s request. In a remarkable way, that sense of accommodation doesn’t seem reciprocal.

The use of the single-signature policy is most often applied when a board member is on vacation, and another is temporarily unavailable or hospitalized. Nothing in existing law or LD 497 prevents the municipal officers from thoroughly reviewing the authorized disbursements. As a general rule, the policy is established to allow for exigent circumstances.

LD 497 would have provided Maine’s elected municipal officers the enhanced flexibility necessary to work with these policies to expedite certain limited warrant disbursements and to decide for themselves how often those policies should be reviewed and amended. Municipal officials thank Representative Gifford for advancing this legislation. What ultimately became objectionable about the bill remains unclear.

FOAA (cont’d)

They included Representative Teresa Hayes of Buckfield, a representative from the Governor’s Office and a representative from the State’s Office of Information Technology. Some interesting points were made by these individuals as well. Comments included:

- Is this bill about public access to information or public ownership of information?
- Are the meaningful objectives of this bill getting in the way of efficient government operations?
- and should we be looking at the federal laws relating to the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act for balance?

The Last Word. Before wrapping this up, it’s worth highlighting an analogy that was proposed by a testifier at this public hearing. The analogy was that a bank that holds your mortgage doesn’t let you pay your mortgage when you feel like it,

so why should a government be able to provide information to the public only when it feels like it? It’s a poorly fitting analogy. All banks provide plenty of notice and a predictable monthly payment schedule for their mortgagors. The bank doesn’t just randomly show up at your door unannounced one day and demand a certain payment on your mortgage. That’s the kind of disruption LD 1465 would allow.

The Committee’s Information Request. Among other information requested by the Committee, Rep. Charles Priest (Brunswick) asked the supporters of LD 1465 for specific examples of problems reviewing public records under current law. The only issue referenced by the Heritage Policy Center at the public hearing had to do with the Maine Turnpike Authority. The work session on LD 1465 has been scheduled by the Judiciary Committee for Wednesday, May 11 at 1:30 p.m.

Penalties (cont'd)

thereafter.

The Committee decided that no changes needed to be made to the current system governing how a municipality can petition and ultimately vote to withdraw from a Regional School Unit. It was admitted that the withdrawal system (found at 20-AMRSA, Section 1466) is difficult. That system involves many steps, can take well over a year to fully implement, cannot be finally effected until the municipality has been a part of a RSU for at least three years, and can only be accomplished by a supermajority, two-thirds vote of the seceding municipality at referendum. Despite the many hoops that need to be stepped through, the Committee felt the withdrawal option presented a viable opportunity to withdraw for those communities that truly decided to consolidate because of the penalty impacts.

The other “vehicle bill” in the possession of the Committee, LD 139, is slated to incorporate the going-forward approach to school consolidation/region-alization being advanced by the LePage Administration.

That approach is not that dissimilar to the incentive approach advanced by MMA and others over four years ago. A “Fund for the Efficient Delivery of Educational Services” would be created for the purpose of providing financial resources to school systems willing to implement

more efficient delivery systems with other school systems, the local municipalities, county governments or regional collabora-tives. The original Fund for the Efficient Delivery of Educational Services was part of the Question 1A initiative advanced by MMA and adopted by the voters in 2004. That Fund would have been capitalized by 2% of the entire annual General Purpose Aid to Education appropriation (GPA), or nearly \$20 million a year.

In contrast, Education Commissioner Steve Bowen is suggesting that \$1.5 million a year be dedicated to the program as a modest, start-up amount. The Education Committee intends to provide an oppor-tunity for public input on the idea before taking votes on the proposal. At issue, of course, is whether the timing is right to take \$1.5 million off the top of GPA for the Efficiency Fund program.

GA Accountability (cont'd)

they deserve.

These “client accountability” propo-nents also offered testimony in conditional support of LD 1039, the study bill. While the proponents welcome an opportunity to discuss the GA program, they believe two substantive amendments are necessary.

First, with respect to the membership of the working group, the CA proponents believe that the Maine Welfare Directors Association (MWDA) is better suited to appoint the four GA representatives. In

the bill, some of that representation is predetermined.

Second, the tasks assigned to the group need to be expanded to focus on issues other than the efficiency of local-level administration. The bill should task the working group with examining the state’s role in the program and focus on the development of methods that improve GA program accountability to state and local taxpayers.

Finally, the GA administrators from the Auburn, Lewiston and Rockport op-posed the certification program proposed in LD 1431. Rather than moving forward with the certification program, these GA administrators believe that the study, similar to that proposed in LD 1039, is the more appropriate first step. Rather than quickly foisting yet another costly mandate on municipalities, agreement over what the property taxpayers should reasonably be expected to fund needs to be decided.

MMA echoed the sentiments ex-pressed by these GA administrators.

The Health and Human Services Committee will be voting on these issues next Tuesday, May 3 at 1:00 p.m. As was repeatedly stated by the “administrator accountability” proponents throughout the public hearing, the “client accountability” proponents also hope that when making its decision on this issue, the Commit-tee relies on verifiable facts, rather than unsubstantiated anecdotes and hyperbole.

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 the Legislature’s web site at <http://www.state.me.us/legis/senate/Documents/hearing/ANPHFrame.htm>. If you wish to have updates to the Hearing Schedules e-mailed directly to you, sign up on the ANPH homepage listed above. Work Session schedules and hearing updates are available at the Legislative Information page at <http://www.state.me.us/legis/>.

Monday, May 2

Education & Cultural Affairs

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

Tel: 287-3125

LD 250 – An Act To Permit Tuition Subsidies by Municipalities.

LD 1283 – An Act To Allow Students Choice in High School Enrollment.

LD 1316 – An Act To Expand Magnet Schools in Maine.

LD 1424 – An Act To Enhance Parental Roles in Education Choice.

Energy, Utilities & Technology

Room 211, Cross State Office Building, 10:00 a.m.

Tel: 287-4143

LD 1506 – An Act To Remove Obstacles to the Use of Technological Advances for Heating in Multifamily Structures.

LD 1527 – An Act To Encourage the Creation of Jobs through Development of Maine’s Solar Industry

State & Local Government

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

Tel: 287-1330

LD 1248 – An Act To Require Approval by the Voters of Legislation To Enact or Increase a Tax or Fee.

9:30 a.m.

LD 1213 – An Act To Provide Funding for a Convention Center or Civic Center in Cumberland County.

LD 1297 – An Act Relating to the Qualifications for the Position of Municipal Officer.

LD 1343 – An Act To Limit Interest Assessed against Municipalities.

Taxation

HEARINGS (cont'd)

Room 127, State House, 10:00 a.m.

Tel: 287-1552

LD 1385 – An Act To Provide Tax Relief to Residents Deployed for Military Duty or Stationed outside of Maine.

LD 550 – An Act To Provide a Property Tax Credit to Veterans.

LD 838 – An Act To Make the Homestead Property Tax Exemption More Flexible for Municipalities and Remain Revenue Neutral for the State.

LD 1081 – An Act To Provide a Property Tax Exemption for Family Burying Grounds.

LD 1414 – An Act To Provide Property Tax Relief for Year-round Residents 67 Years of Age or Older.

1:00 p.m.

LD 965 – Resolve, Directing the Bureau of Revenue Services To Provide Guidance Regarding the Valuation of Residential Alternative Energy Infrastructure.

LD 1266 – An Act To Protect Municipalities That Host Wind Energy Developments.

LD 1292 – Resolve, To Establish a Study Group To Examine the Taxation by Municipalities of Renewable Energy Facilities' Property.

LD 1086 – An Act To Promote Plug-in Electric Vehicle Sales.

Tuesday, May 3

Education & Cultural Affairs

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

Tel: 287-3125

LD 1307 – An Act To Amend and Clarify Certain Education Statutes.

LD 606 – An Act To Protect State Education Funds.

LD 1471 – An Act To Require Voter Validation for a School Administrative Unit To Retain Ownership of a School No Longer Used Primarily for Classroom Education.

Energy, Utilities & Technology

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

Tel: 287-4143

LD 1483 – An Act To Amend the Sanford Sewerage District.

Labor, Commerce, Research & Economic Development

Room 220, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.

Tel: 287-1333

LD 1007 – An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Comprehensive Planning To Encourage the Development of Affordable Housing.

Taxation

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

Tel: 287-1552

LD 1235 – An Act To Allow a Tax-free Employee Illness Account.

LD 752 – An Act To Provide Funding for Landfills by Imposing a Gift Package Surcharge.

Transportation

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

Tel: 287-4148

LD 1454 – An Act To Allow Police Officers To Operate Mobile Command Units without a Special License.

LD 1495 – An Act To Allow 45 Days To Register a Newly Acquired Motor Vehicle.

Wednesday, May 4

Education & Cultural Affairs

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

Tel: 287-3125

LD 93 – An Act To Improve Essential Programs and Services Funding for Education.

LD 347 – Resolve, Directing the Commissioner of Education to Convene a Task Force To Develop a Proposal for a More Equitable Distribution of Kindergarten to Grade 12 State Education Funding.

LD 958 – Resolve, To Direct the Department of Education To Review the Essential Programs and Services Model.

LD 1274 – An Act To Restore Equity in Education Funding.

LD 817 – An Act To Stabilize Short-term Funding of Public Kindergarten to Grade 12 Education.

LD 1017 – An Act To Improve the Essential Programs and Services Funding Model by Providing for a Cost of Housing Adjustment.

LD 1051 – An Act To Calculate Essential Programs and Services Funding on an Equal Labor Market.

LD 1267 – An Act To Amend the School Transportation Formula To Recognize One-way Bus Trips.

Inland Fisheries & Wildlife

Room 206, Cross State Office Building, 9:00 a.m.

Tel: 287-1338

LD 1084 – An Act To Amend Certain Provisions of Maine Fish and Wildlife Laws.

Labor, Commerce, Research & Economic Development

Room 220, Cross State Office Building, 9:00 a.m.

Tel: 287-1333

LD 1314 – An Act To Standardize the Definition of “Independent Contractor”.

State & Local Government

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

Tel: 287-1330

LD 1460 – An Act Concerning the Recording of Plans for Subdivisions.
9:30 a.m.

LD 392 – An Act To Amend the Requirements for Publishing Municipal Legal Notices.

LD 940 – An Act To Increase Access to State Rule-making Notices.

LD 1223 – An Act Regarding Credit Card Transactions for InforME Services.

LD 1445 – An Act To Provide More Efficient Notice of Public Activities.

Veterans & Legal Affairs

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

Tel: 287-1310

LD 1469 – An Act To Permit Video Gaming for Money Conducted by Nonprofit Organizations.

Thursday, May 5

Criminal Justice & Public Safety

Rm. 436, State House, 1:00 p.m.

Tel: 287-1122

LD 1423 – An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Disorderly Conduct.

LD 1491 – An Act To Strengthen the Laws against Driving under the Influence of Drugs.

Education & Cultural Affairs

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

Tel: 287-3125

LD 568 – An Act To Create a Unified Early childhood Education

HEARINGS (cont'd)

System in Maine.

LD 775 – An Act To Clarify Special Education Reporting Requirements.

LD 1345 – An Act To Align Maine Special Education Statutes with Federal Requirements.

LD 1430 – Resolve, To Conduct a Review of the Roles and Functions of the Department of Education and of Certain Mandates.

Judiciary

Room 438, State House, 1:30 p.m.

Tel: 287-1327

LD 1473 – An Act To Clarify Rights-of-way Laws.

LD 1135 – An Act To Protect the Rights of Property Owners.

LD 1477 – An Act To Protect Owners of Real Property.

Friday, May 6

Education & Cultural Affairs

Room 202, Cross State Office Building, 9:00 a.m.

Tel: 287-3125

LD 959 – Resolve, Directing the Department of Education To Provide Curriculum Consistency in Maine Public Schools.

LD 1422 – An Act To Prepare Maine People for the Future Economy.

LD 949 – An Act To Update Maine's High School Graduation Requirements.

LD 1488 – An Act To Create Innovative Public School Zones and Innovative Public School Districts.

11:00 a.m.

LD 1503 – An Act To Promote School Attendance and Increase School Achievement.

Environment & Natural Resources

Room 214, Cross State Office Building, 9:00 a.m.

Tel: 287-4149

LD 1434 – An Act To Streamline the Waste Motor Oil Disposal Site Remediation Program.

State & Local Government

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

Tel: 287-1330

LD 1416 – An Act To Provide Options to Municipalities Concerning the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code.

LD 1442 – An Act To Clarify Enforcement of Maine's Building Code.

IN THE HOPPER

This edition of the Legislative Bulletin is filled with copy which has crowded out the "In the Hopper" space to file descriptions of recently printed bills. Please review the comprehensive list of LDs of municipal interest on MMA's website: http://memun.org/public/MMA/svc/SFR/LD/LD_fr.htm