



LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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Singularity of Legislative Attacks on Home Rule

The “singularity” was coined by Vernor Vinge in 1993 from a technological perspective where the development of processes would lead to exponential growth and uncontrollable changes with little human ability to shape the future. There is much debate as to whether technological singularity has already occurred or is simply nearing the point of no return. However, there is little debate that the legislation proposed this session with significant municipal impacts is uncontrollable and creating an on the ground reality that is predictably going to result in irreversible harm to the ability of communities to shape their own future.

With the majority of decision-making debates occurring off mic and in partisan caucuses, how such views are formed and influenced is not always apparent. However, the effective bipartisan message from legislators in many committees is a mixture of “I don’t care” to “It’s my way, even though it’s your highway,” while other committees seem to work harder at achieving unanimity and balance.

From the use of statutory initiatives to roll over democratically adopted ordinances in communities that legislators do not represent, to the statutory preemptions of life safety ordinances to save developer profits, the unified bipartisan message is that the residents and voters of Maine cannot be trusted with their home rule authority.

Impact fees, established to share the burden for the cost of development and its impact on the shared services of a community received both a blow and a study this week. As reported in last week’s *Legislative Bulletin*, two proposals introduced last Thursday made value judgements on the current process used by municipalities and well defined by existing statutes. On Tuesday of this week, the Housing and Economic Development Committee made quick work of both LD 1246, *Resolve, Directing the Department of Economic and Community Development to Convene a Working Group to Review the Process of Setting Impact Fees*, sponsored by Rep. Gere (Kennebunkport) and LD 1498, *An Act to Limit Municipal Impact Fees on Housing Development*, sponsored by Rep. Faulkingham (Winter Harbor), passing both out of committee with only slight amendments.

The most egregious of the bills, LD 1498, originally proposed limiting all impact fees for all development to strictly infrastructure abutting the property to be developed. If the development increased student numbers requiring temporary classroom additions, the municipality would have to wait until it could qualify for school improvement funding to accommodate the greater numbers and, in the meantime, fund the temporary classroom spaces on the backs of the local property taxpayers alone. Additionally, even if the funds are collected after the infrastructure investment has been paid for and kept in the separate account required by statute, the funds must be

spent 360 days after the collection. The bill which also amended the allowed expenditures for all development types shifts from capital improvements to strict infrastructure improvements.

LD 1246, the study bill, was moved forward with a reluctant removal of the abutting property language, and an assumption of an
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Municipal Voices Needed

As you will read in the articles published in this edition of the *Legislative Bulletin*, the work done at the municipal level, which is informed by your community’s residents, is being questioned. Legislation seeking to restrict home rule authority and stifle local decision making, as well as comments describing local level investments as excessive appear pervasive, leaving many local officials scratching their heads as they continue to provide valued and necessary public services and programs.

While the criticism is nonconstructive and rather frustrating, what is more troubling is the pace at which the legislature is conducting its work. Public hearings are being held with very little notice and, in at least two cases, scheduled for bills that have not yet been printed. Hearings are being held on a long list of bills addressing similar issues, with hearing participants provided three minutes to deliver testimony on three, five, or seven bills. In some cases, the list contains initiatives with conflicting proposals, leaving participants to testify both in support and opposition in a single breath.

We understand that time is of the essence and this work needs to be completed within a reasonable timeframe. However, the work also needs to be completed in a thoughtful and well-informed manner.

This is all to say that now is the time for municipal officials to connect with their representatives in the Maine Legislature.

Talk about your budgets, revenue sources, expenditures and cost drivers. Promote the initiative solutions your communities are implementing to address issues and the valuable work done locally and driven by community volunteers. Discuss how your roles and those of other municipal employees support the state level policy priorities. Remind legislators that as providers of local government services, municipal leaders are partners in an intergovernmental system that is dependent on each member to perform their tasks.

Please take the time this weekend to reach out. The decisions being made at the state level will have long-lasting impacts on your communities. Make certain your legislators understand the impacts before casting a final vote.

emergency preamble requiring a two-thirds vote of both bodies and charges the Housing Opportunities program with carrying out the working group on impact fees in consultation with municipal experts and developers. Questions around where the Housing Opportunities Program would live in the future and if the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) should move forward with the initiative or should the intended home in the Maine Office of Community Affairs (MOCA) assume the obligation, which created the additional amendment moving the program into the new executive office.

Capital improvements are generally part of a 10-year spending plan informed by a comprehensive plan, but a development proposal might require that an investment be expedited prior to the implementation of a long-term plan. The committee moved the bill unanimously and added to the bill to move the Housing Opportunities Program from DECD to MOCA with little debate on how the fees are used now, or regard for community testimony or potential impacts for different types of development other than housing. As voted, the bill will now delay development because a town will not be able to collect the fee in advance to conduct the improvement out of line with their 10-year capital plan or address other unrealized development related issues in response to a data farm or small cell nuclear development proposal in the future. While the example is overblown, the reality of what happened was not.

Next the committee moved on to a public hearing on LD 1272, *An Act to Address the Housing Crisis by Reducing Barriers to Building More Accessory Dwelling Units*, sponsored by Speaker Fecteau (Biddeford), which upends all recently adopted accessory dwelling unit (ADU) ordinances across the state and allows all ADUs to be split from primary ownership and resold as condos, rather than accessory. This makes them equal to the primary use. The bill also preempts municipal sprinkler ordinances on the units, and prevents municipalities from regulating short term rentals by placing restrictions for long term rentals of ADUs, or requiring owner occupancy for the activity.

Speaking to the needs of the banking industry, Speaker Fecteau shared that these locally imposed, democratically supported restrictions to the recent ordinance amendments and not the exorbitant cost of con-

struction are preventing more ADUs from being built. A condo or three in every yard would help the banking industry (and real estate investment trusts) create better finance products for the addition of income producing units because they could be sold at inflated prices like all other real estate, particularly in hot markets. Coastal areas where communities are seeking ways to grow housing and not the transient hotel market strongly disagree. These communities desire neighborhoods and owner-occupied additions that guarantee the preservation of community over ghost neighborhoods.

Additionally, the new units have a zero-parking lot standard for all units and mandates up to three ADUs not subservient to primary use.

Déjà vu anyone? The rest of the nation has approached this with technical support for desired outcomes led by the communities themselves recognizing that you move faster and build better when you start with community. While using other cities as examples in their testimony, Maine's Legislature seems bent on shoving the same standards on Caribou as for Kennebunkport and adopting statewide rather than community led changes.

Speaking against the proposal, Maine Audubon highlighted the habitat issues with allowing a three-unit subdivision of existing lots with no local review, and the changes to the density standard already at play including a stakeholder group that will balance sensible subdivision reform collectively, with a view beyond the southern region, as the law impacts the entire state.

Senior Advisor on Housing Policy for the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and Future, Greg Payne, was non-committal speaking neither for nor against but spoke to the ways zoning law thwart the creation of housing units so desperately needed, and committed to helping with language development.

Perhaps they don't read their own statistics. It's municipalities with their outrageous zoning laws that are producing the housing units the state has established as a priority with little support for the work while the value judgements against communities drips from the dome like gospel in a revival tent.

Thankfully, some bipartisan chickens came home to roost unanimously in Agriculture Conservation and Forestry (ACF), though. As the housing committee leaves its mark on the built environment that will be

recognizable for decades, the ACF committee voted out a balanced version of LD 1655, *An Act to Allow the Keeping of Chickens on Private Residential Property*, sponsored by Rep. Poirier (Skowhegan). During the work session, the sponsor shared that she chose a different number of chickens in an amended version which also stripped out all animal health standards in the original version and preempted municipal authority to be able to limit a household from keeping fewer than 12 chickens because Tractor Supply would not sell less than 12 chickens at a time.

Municipal ordinance as decided by box store sales of chickens not health safety or lot capacity. Interesting. Can you envision building codes for ADUs as sold by Temu?

As amended by Rep. Pluecker, house chair of the committee, the bill was unanimously supported by those members present to simply reinforce what is the largely expected fallout of a Constitutional amendment protecting the right to food. A municipality cannot prohibit chickens but can determine time, place, and manner of their keeping, including sensible regulation requiring licensing and setbacks as uncovered by the Waterville anaconda. See the April 25 edition for the backstory.

Perhaps the legislative rush to the finish line is what Lewis Carol envisioned as he penned the lines in Alice in Wonderland... *There is a place, like no place on earth. A land full of wonder, mystery and danger. Some say, to survive it, you need to be as mad as a hatter. Which, luckily, I am.*

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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HEARING SCHEDULE

For the week of May 5, 2025

Note: It appears as though the legislative presiding officers have waived the requirement that bills be advertised for public hearings two weeks in advance; therefore, you should check your newspapers for Legal Notices as there may be changes in the hearing schedule. It is not uncommon at this time of the session to have a bill printed one day and a public hearing scheduled within a couple of days. Weekly schedules for hearings and work sessions can be found on the Legislature's website at: <http://legislature.maine.gov/calendar/#Weekly/>. Below are the public hearings for which we have received notice prior to the publishing of this Legislative Bulletin.

MONDAY, MAY 5

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

LD 1577 Resolve, to Establish the Commission to Study and Recommend Solutions for Modernizing the Maine Legislature

LD 1649 Resolve, to Establish the Blue Ribbon Commission to Study the Operations of the Legislature

LD 1673 Resolve, to Establish a Pilot Project to Facilitate the Inclusion of Economic Impact Statements in the Legislative Process

11:00 a.m.

LD 1628 An Act to Allow Municipalities to Regulate Exterior Lights

LD 1635 An Act to Streamline Municipal Referenda Recount Initiation

LD 1741 An Act Regarding County Law Enforcement Administration and Rural Law Enforcement

1:00 p.m.

LD 1593 An Act to Require Certain Public Entities to Define Their Use of the Term "Equity"

TUESDAY, MAY 6

Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry
Room 214, Cross Building, 1:00 p.m.
Tel: 287-1312

LD 1450 An Act Regarding the Voluntary Municipal Farm Support Program

LD 1762 An Act to Protect Recreational Trails by Establishing the Trails for the Future Program

LD 1771 An Act to Strengthen Oversight of Kennels by Changing the Licensing Authority from Municipalities to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry

Transportation
Room 126, State House, 1:00 p.m.
Tel: 287-414

LD 1804 An Act Concerning Funding and Oversight of Transportation Matters

LD 1809 An Act to Further Stabilize Highway Fund Revenue

WEDNESDAY, MAY 7

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

LD 1425 An Act to Improve Access to Sustainable and Low-barrier Trauma Recovery Services

THURSDAY, MAY 8

Housing & Economic Development
Room 206, Cross Building, 9:00 a.m.
Tel: 287-4880

LR 289 (not yet printed as LD, no language available to public) An Act to Revise the Growth Management Program Laws

LD 876 An Act to Support Rural Resilience and Emergency Response Through the Maine Service Fellows Program

LD 1751 An Act to Improve the Growth Management Program Laws

LD 1845 An Act to Establish the Working Waterfront Advisory Council

FRIDAY, MAY 9

Housing & Economic Development
Room 206, Cross Building, 9:00 a.m.
Tel: 287-4880

LD 1585 Resolve, to Direct the Maine State Housing Authority to Amend Its Rules Governing the Fuel Assistance Program Regarding Benefit Payments for Wood Fuel

LR 1710 (not yet printed as LD, no language available to public) An Act to Require Increased Housing Density or Lower Minimum Lot Sizes for Workforce Housing

Runaway Spending, Never Going Back

Wrong way on a one-way track...

As a rule, municipal officials generally support legislative proposals that aim to provide relief to Maine property taxpayers and is a major theme of the Maine Municipal Association Legislative Policy Committee's 2025-2026 legislative platform. One such platform bill, LD 1729, *An Act to Increase the Rate of Reimbursement to Municipalities for Revenue Lost as a Result of the Maine Resident Homestead Property Tax Exemption*, sponsored by Sen. Bennett (Oxford County), had a public hearing before the Taxation Committee on Thursday morning.

As proposed and supported by the bill sponsor, funding reimbursement under the homestead exemption program at only 76% is technically an unfunded mandate and one in which all municipalities must participate. Simply put, LD 1729 would increase the reimbursement for the exemption to 100%, but considering the financial pressures at the state level, proposed increasing it incremen-

tally over time. With the number of tax relief proposals in front of the committee this session, MMA strongly supports this approach as a sensible and sustainable solution for property tax relief.

Oxford Town Manager and LPC member Adam Garland testified in support of the bill, sharing a real-world example from his town that a 100% reimbursement would bring \$75,000 in additional revenue. Oxford is a town with significant commercial property and summer residents, putting into perspective how other communities with a higher residential tax base may stand to benefit.

With no opposition or other comments on the bill, the public hearing was closed. The work session has not yet been scheduled, however, given the increased pace at which things are taking place under the dome, it's likely to be at any time.

The excitement continued in the Taxation Committee room when they returned to the

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horseshoe after lunch to continue their work, which consisted of seven public hearings on a variety of tax-related proposals. The first train out of the station was LD 1770, *An Act to Provide Immediate and Long-term Property Tax Relief to Maine Households*, sponsored by President Daughtry (Cumberland County).

This bill would increase the Property Tax Fairness Credit (PTFC) as part of a comprehensive approach to reducing the burdens on property taxpayers. It would also create a task force, which would include three seats at the table for town and city officials, to examine the assessment of property taxes and available property tax relief programs and make recommendations for improving the process.

The sponsor recognized the immense amount of tax relief proposals before the committee this session and expressed appreciation for the months of bipartisan work it took to bring this proposal forward. She further shared her firsthand experience as she traveled throughout Maine in the fall, on how many Mainers are struggling to pay their property taxes.

Following the sponsor's presentation of the proposal, one by one individuals rose to testify in support of the measure, all with positive comments about the proposed increases to the PTFC and the creation of a task force, and all pointing to Maine being the state with the

highest property tax burden, further urging committee members to pass this step towards meaningful property tax relief.

It was when Dr. Michael Allen, Associate Commissioner for Tax Policy in the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, rose to testify in support of LD 1770 that committee members, in jest, almost fell over in their chairs. His testimony raised concern with the depth and range of the data the task force would be required to review and questioned if they would be able to complete the work in the specified timeframe.

To allow the task force to proceed in a meaningful way, Dr. Allen suggested that an interim report be issued in February, with a final report submitted to the yet to be elected 133rd Maine State Legislature, who would have the authority to report out legislation based on the recommendations contained in the final report. Just prior to falling victim to the three-minute rule regarding length of testimony, he suggested adding to the task force workload a review of TIFs and how municipalities could consolidate costs, perking the ears of municipal officials and advocates in the room.

Rep. Swallow (Houlton) commented that he understands the mission of the task force is to consider property tax relief, however, in his opinion there is a lot of tax shifting

happening with LD 1770, in addition to the other bills he's seen regarding tax relief, but there is no actual relief, leading to the question of whether the task force should widen their charge to include all taxes, for a more comprehensive tax review. Dr. Allen responded that the property tax review is already a big project and adding those elements would change the scope to a full tax reform task force and reiterated that the task force should include how to consolidate municipal services.

The sentiment was agreed upon by Rep. Cloutier (Lewiston) who shared that it made sense to look at each silo of taxes before seeing the big picture of how it all connects, conjuring an image of a railroad map—the web of tracks woven together all converging at one station.

Rep. Quint (Hodgdon) concurred that there is no actual reduction in taxes and that spending needs to also be reviewed. She added that municipalities get their funding from property taxes and that there needs to be some control over municipal spending. Further, the task force should include a review of how municipalities spend their money, because clearly, they need to reign it in.

Cue Soul Asylum's hit song, "Runaway Train," because this hearing was going the

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IN THE HOPPER

(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.)

Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry

LD 1450 *An Act Regarding the Voluntary Municipal Farm Support Program* (Sponsored by Sen. Tipping of Penobscot Cty.)

This bill moves the existing Voluntary Municipal Farm Support Program from the statutes governing agriculture to those governing taxation. The current program seeks to protect and support local farms, preserve farmland and reduce the fiscal burden on municipalities resulting from new development in rural areas by authorizing legislative bodies to enter into easement agreements with qualifying landowners and return up to 100% of the annual property taxes assessed on the qualifying property. More substantively, the bill reduces the minimum term of the easement from 20 to 10 years.

LD 1762 *An Act to Protect Recreational Trails by Establishing the Trails for the Future Program* (Sponsored by Rep. Blier of Buxton)

This bill establishes the Trails for the Future Fund and authorizes the Land

for Maine's Future board to make matching grants to state agencies and cooperating entities, including local governments and municipal conservation commissions, to acquire property or interests in property that is designed to protect public access to recreational trails. The bill also creates the Trails for the Future Program to help protect public access to established recreational trails, including snowmobile trails and all-terrain vehicle trails, through the acquisition of property and the establishment of easements. The bill directs the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to administer the program and provides the department a permanent right of first refusal on any property with an established recreation trail acquired in fee or protected by covenant at a price determined by an independent appraiser based on the value of the property at the time of consideration of purchase and assign the right to a suitable organization or a local government.

LD 1771 *An Act to Strengthen Oversight of Kennels by Changing the Licensing Authority from Municipalities to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry* (Sponsored by Sen. Bailey of York Cty.)

This bill shifts responsibility for issuing kennel licenses from municipalities to the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry and specifies the department's authority to refuse to issue or renew, suspend or revoke a facility license for an animal shelter, kennel, boarding kennel, breeding kennel or pet shop.

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Runaway Spending, Never Going Backcont'd

wrong way on this track.

"Seems like I should be getting somewhere, somehow, I'm neither here nor there"

However, needing to be sure the statement led to a question, Rep. Quint reflected on Rep. Swallow's question and asked where the money would come from, even with task force recommendations. To which Dr. Allen responded that he felt they were saying the same thing—the whole tax system should be looked at and include consolidation, referencing that consolidation was part of Gov. Baldacci's tax relief proposal in 2005, the last time property taxes were reviewed in depth—and to reduce municipal spending.

"Can you help me remember how to smile? Make it somehow all seem worthwhile. How on earth did I get so jaded?"

After being briefly sidetracked with a question regarding the PTFC part of the bill, discussion returned to municipal spending. Rep. Lavigne (Berwick) equated controlling municipal spending to eating soup with a fork and questioned if putting a cap on the amount property taxes could rise each year would help to reduce municipal spending. Not wanting to opine on the specific approaches, Dr. Allen suggested the task force should look at all angles to come up with recommendations, including how other states approach property taxes.

Maine Farmland Trust contributed testimo-

ny in support and further suggested a member of the agricultural community be added to the task force. Their testimony highlighted that not all municipalities are aware of existing programs for farmers and farmland and that their voice would be able to advocate for farmland interests on the task force.

"Life's mystery seems so faded."

At this time, cosponsor Sen. Baldacci (Penobscot County) swooped in to offer his support for LD 1770, particularly for the task force which would spark deep thinking on a topic that is overdue for an in-depth review. He also pointed to the booklet all legislators recently received from The Tax Foundation, a conservative libertarian think tank, for reference.

"I can go where no one else can go, I know what no one else knows."

After listening to testimony to this point, MMA rose to testify in strong support for the bill, particularly for the PTFC increases and the local government seats on the task force to discuss sustainable solutions for reducing the burdens on property taxpayers. The testimony also suggested including unfunded mandates in the scope of the task force to get a full picture of where the pressures on local governments are and develop comprehensive solutions that would make a real difference.

Additionally, MMA's testimony included an observation of the working group directive

suggesting that property tax relief measures, such as revenue sharing, are being misused, is not constructive dialogue and sets the stage for an "us against them" approach. MMA further shared based on discussion to this point, that 65 – 75% of a municipal budget is dedicated to fund county assessments and school costs and to say that the remaining 25 – 35% is spent callously, is a false narrative, and although not said, quite insulting.

The Chamber of Commerce testified neither for nor against the bill and the Maine Realtors Association also testified in favor but both requested seats on the task force, so the expertise their members have could help to provide solutions for much needed property tax relief. One can assume they will include condoization of ADUs to generate more taxable units.

A work session has not yet been scheduled for this bill, but time is of the essence. Consider this the train's conductor on the intercom, calling for municipal officials to contact their legislators and discuss how property taxes are used, why this discussion is so important to have, and that decisions must be made thoughtfully, with local leaders considered as partners, not as a special interest group who takes a ride on a runaway train with taxpayer money.

"Here I am, just a-drowning in the rain, with a ticket for a runaway train."

IN THE HOPPER (cont'd)

Housing & Economic Development

LD 1751 *An Act to Improve the Growth Management Program Laws* (Sponsored by Rep. Roberts of South Berwick)

This bill amends the Growth Management Act (GMA) program by: (1) updating several definitions; (2) clarifying that an adopted plan remains in effect until amended or repealed; (3) authorizing municipalities to use the same processes used to published public information when complying with provisions in the GMA requiring public inspection of a proposed comprehensive plan; (4) requiring a comprehensive plan to include a needs assessment section that identifies existing or desired conditions necessary to support housing, economic growth and development; protect public health, safety and welfare; and protect the environment and critical resources and describe the public input received to determine identified needs; (5) requiring that the implementation strategy section of a plan include a capital investment plan identifying the replacement and expansion of public facilities and services required to meet projected growth and development; (6) requiring a comprehensive plan to include a future land use plan that identifies and designates geographic areas as growth and rural areas, as well as areas appropriate for medium-density development that does to require expansion of municipalities facilities; (7) clarifying that a

municipality is not required to identify growth areas if it demonstrates that it is not possible to accommodate future residential, commercial or industrial growth, the community has experienced minimal or little growth, or the municipality does not have a downtown or densely developed area; (8) in the process of developing an implementation plan, requiring municipalities to establish development standards and timely permitting procedures, ensuring that needed public services are available, and preventing inappropriate development in natural hazard areas, as well as discouraging incompatible development in rural areas; (9) extending from 10 to 12 years state certification of a comprehensive plan; (10) amending deadlines associated with certifying a comprehensive plan; and (11) repealing portions of the GMA regarding inventory and analysis requirements, guidelines for policy development and implementation strategies.

State & Local Government

LD 1593 *An Act to Require Certain Public Entities to Define Their Use of the Term "Equity"* (Sponsored by Rep. Faulkingham of Winter Harbor)

This bill requires public entities, including municipalities, to post on a publicly accessible website the definition of "equity" used to make decisions based on advancing equity.

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IN THE HOPPER (*cont'd*)

LD 1628 *An Act to Allow Municipalities to Regulate Exterior Lights* (Sponsored by Rep. Quint of Hodgdon)

This bill allows municipalities to adopt ordinances to regulate exterior lights to prevent undue annoyance or adversely affect the health or safety of a member of the public or enjoyment or use of another property, including requiring the exterior light to be positioned downward or equipped with a shield to narrow the beam of light projected by the exterior light.

LD 1635 *An Act to Streamline Municipal Referenda Recount Initiation* (Sponsored by Rep. Arata of New Gloucester)

This bill requires an automatic recount to be conducted when a municipal referendum passes or fails by less than 1% of all the votes cast, including any blank ballots.

Transportation

LD 1804 *An Act Concerning Funding and Oversight of Transportation Matters* (Sponsored by Sen. Farrin of Somerset Cty.)

This bill amends laws to prescribe authority and responsibility over funding over transportation related issues by: (1) establishing that the Transportation Committee has jurisdiction over highway related appropriations and allocations, as well as minimum levels of funding for bridges, highway lights and multimodal transportation, which must be adjusted by the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index each biennium; (2) increasing from 40% to 60% the percentage of automobile-related sales and use taxes transferred to the Highway Fund and adding automobile-related sales and

use taxes to the revenues allocated to the Highway Fund; (3) requiring the Bureau of State Police to be wholly funded by the General Fund; (4) adding multimodal transportation to the list of allowable uses of the Highway Fund; (5) redefining “transportation infrastructure;” (6) removing the designation of project-specific and non-project-specific procurement and retaining the provision that the Department of Transportation has full power to purchase all supplies, materials and equipment that are incidental to, or necessary for, construction, improvement or maintenance of transportation infrastructure; and (7) beginning March 1, 2026, requiring the department and the Maine Turnpike Authority to submit biennial reports in each even-numbered year, summarizing the procurement activities over the preceding two calendar years.

Veterans & Legal Affairs

LD 1840 *An Act to Amend the Maine Medical Use of Cannabis Act* (Sponsored by Sen. Hickman of Kennebec Cty.)

This bill amends the Maine Medical Use of Cannabis Act and among other changes amends the section of law governing local regulation by prohibiting the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, except where explicitly authorized or directed by law, from requiring a registered caregiver, registered dispensary, cannabis testing facility or manufacturing facility to use a form issued by the department to comply with the requirements of the law. The bill also prohibits the department from denying an application, if prior to January 1, 2026, a municipality authorized a cannabis facility without having adopted a warrant article or ordinance allowing operation of the facility within municipal boundaries.