



# LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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## We Want it; So, You Do It.

Spring may be here chronologically, but the weather in Augusta was anything but warm for municipal government. This week can be characterized as a litany of public hearings for bills to address the abject failures of municipal government from the point of view of a handful of legislators who are the same people who cannot agree on a single budget document.

In the Housing and Economic Development Committee, a public hearing was held on LD 1184, *An Act to Require Municipal Reporting on Residential Building Permits, Dwelling Units Permitted and Demolished and Certificates of Occupancy Issued*, sponsored by Rep. Gere (Kennebunkport). The bill would mandate municipalities to report on new categories of building permits not usually collected, including numbers of residential units, demolitions, and additions that result in the creation of new housing units, and financial demographic data for the occupants of the resulting residential units and numbers of building permits that are denied. Functionally, it would require municipalities to issue certificates of occupancy or at least follow up on building permits now not required.

Queue the mandate mantra.

Speaking to a lack of accuracy in U.S. Census data, the Department of Economic and Community Development provided that not all communities report data, and the voluntary nature of its collection in the census system means the data is incomplete. A pilot project uncovered that the census data was missing 176 out of 1,700 captured additional housing units. They felt that mandating the information collection was important to measure how municipalities are meeting their housing production goals.

Yes, it is the job of municipal government to produce housing data, rather than a task assigned to the development industry who would be in a much better position to report on the units they build and the financial status of the individuals who either purchase or rent the units.

The preferred model for data collection that inspired the bill was the result of a pilot project in southern Maine, where communities are better resourced and have proximity to university internship programs. A report on the project was submitted by one proponent of the bill which not only misunderstands the code enforcement officer training program process but also uncovered that municipalities do not collect the data they need to determine the growth in housing units year to year.

The resulting suggestion from a proponent of the bill was that punishment of noncompliant municipalities should be considered as other states have adopted a carrot and stick approach. The proponent

shared it should be mandatory because only 88 communities are required to enforce the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code therefore most communities will not provide this work without a mandate. The proponent further noted there is \$800,000 in a budget line for the code enforcement officer program in the Office of the Fire Marshal that should be used for additional training on the mandatory reporting.

How about licensing construction professionals and requiring  
*(continued on page 2)*

## Correcting the Tort Claims Record

On April 1, LD 1347, *An Act to Increase the Cap on Liability for Government Entities Under the Maine Tort Claims Act*, was printed and referred to the Judiciary Committee. On Monday, five business days later, the bill was scheduled for a hearing, despite a legislative rule requiring the public to be provided at least two weeks' notice of the hearing. On Wednesday, April 9, the public was notified that the work session on LD 1347 would take place the very next day.

As proposed, the bill increases the limitation for the award of damages under the Maine Tort Claims Act from the current \$400,000 to \$1.25 million. In testimony provided in favor of the bill, the Maine Trial Lawyers' Association claimed that there would be no fiscal impact on insurance risk pools, because municipalities and counties are currently paying premiums that anticipate \$5 to \$10 million in payouts but only result in a maximum claim of \$400,000.

With respect to the premiums paid by members of MMA's Risk Management Services (RMS), that claim is blatantly false.

The premiums members of MMA's liability pool pay are simply based on the maximum level of liability, which is currently \$400,000. No smoke, no mirrors, just an honest calculation of the premiums necessary to cover the pool's collective risks. Furthermore, if the 213% increase to the limit proposed in LD 1347 is enacted, the premiums paid by member municipalities' property taxpayers would increase. By how much? RMS staff estimate that premiums could increase by 24%.

Additionally, it remains unknown what issue the bill is seeking to address. Perhaps there are other solutions that could be implemented that would not shift additional burdens onto Maine's property taxpayers.

We will have to wait until a yet to be determined date to learn of the fate of LD 1347, as the Judiciary Committee decided to postpone yesterday's work session.

them to report on what they build? They have one job that is ironically to produce housing; municipalities have a hundred jobs centered on growing and protecting the community.

While shown in their support for the bill, the Greater Portland Council of Governments spoke to the reality of overworked and under resourced municipalities, they estimate that with the right community partnerships in place, the additional burden of collecting the data would range from 30 minutes to two hours per community.

While the time commitment may appear insignificant to some, for those on the ground, it is an additional task being added to the ever growing municipal to do list, with the question of who will pay or what burden will be lifted off municipal shoulders to accomplish the new task remaining unanswered.

MMA predictably flagged LD 1184 as mandate, asked for it to be funded, and pointed to the dearth of code enforcement officers statewide. The need to follow up and amend the types of data collected on building permits, and the inability for municipal government, unless directly involved in the project, to determine the financial status of the owner or occupant was also added to the mix of concerns.

A work session will likely follow sometime next week if the lack of public notice between printing and scheduling maintains its current course.

Another work session was held on a bill that would undermine local ordinances with the intent of reopening the process of ordinance adoption to scrutiny. LD 261, *An Act Regarding the Authority of Municipalities to Regulate Timber Harvesting*, sponsored by Rep. Bunker (Farmington), requires municipalities that adopted timber harvesting ordinances after 1990 to prove that they had engaged with the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, invited the department to a public meeting, engaged with a forester in the process, and notified abutters, to a granular degree. Under the terms proposed in the bill, failure to supply the required proof would result in a community having to repeat the process for the adoption of a timber harvesting or related ordinance process by 2029 for the ordinance to be certified by the Maine Forest Service (MFS) as meeting the process standard.

One problematic aspect of the bill is a new requirement that the adoption of an ordinance

be consistent with a comprehensive plan, something not required for a municipal wide ordinance or for those adopted because of shoreland zoning. The shoreland zoning law, 38 M.R.S. § 438-A says that the regulation of timber harvesting in shoreland areas must be in accordance with 38 MRS § 438-B and rules adopted by the MFS pursuant to Title 12, § 8867-B.

Section 438-B establishes three options from which each municipality may choose for timber harvesting standards in shoreland areas, which include: (1) repealing local standards and allowing state law to apply; (2) adopting standards identical to state MFS standards; or (3) retaining current municipal timber harvesting standards that were in effect and consistent with state law on December 5, 2005. The new law would open municipalities to challenges of their adoption process for any ordinance perceived to interact with timber harvesting back to 1990, which includes records of who abutter notices were sent to and confirmation of their receipt from 30 years ago.

During the work session held Thursday, the sponsor removed the comprehensive plan requirement, however the retroactive intent became more transparent. Municipalities are adopting egregious ordinances that interrupt timber harvesting activities such as requiring the road to be frozen to haul out heavy loads on public easements, preventing the use of pesticides and herbicides, and preventing the cutting of timber in the shoreland zone, or restricting the hours of harvest to appease residential neighbors, all entirely within their purview. They can't be challenged on the face or content but if reopened, their process of adoption can be challenged beyond the statute of limitation and declared null and void or require a detailed process to readopt them.

One proponent shared that enrolling their land in the Tree Growth program in a community that doesn't allow harvesting in the shoreland zone did not make sense. Municipalities agree. Timber harvest plans for properties enrolled in tree growth are confidential by statute, not disclosed to municipalities, and must have a plan, prepared or reviewed by a licensed professional forester who should be aware of the local ordinance, outlining how the owner will manage the land for tree growth. If the property falls within a publicly disclosed resource protection zone where timber harvesting is prohibited or

tightly regulated and that is not identified in your confidential plan, that is not a municipal issue, that's a plan issue and potentially a fraudulent plan.

The department who initially advised this was not their bill, pivoted to strongly supporting the elements of retroactivity which would shift the burden of proof of engagement with a forester and the department back to 1990 to municipalities who, at that time, did not have access to the internet. Meanwhile, the department's collection of municipal data would remain in filing boxes as disclosed during the stakeholder engagement session on the bill in 2021.

Rep. Pluecker (Warren), committee co-chair, introduced an amendment during the work session that removes the retroactive opening of the process at the heart of the bill, and provides the department with the necessary authority to directly engage with the 21 remaining communities who they identified had not shared their ordinances with the department, and provided them until 2029 to do so. In turn, the department will make all ordinances publicly available so that operators are able to find the rules in a central location. The amendment was unanimously adopted by the eight committee members present, in the most truly stunning bipartisan vote witnessed to date by staff, on a bill that was not in opposition. An incredibly refreshing change, for which the association is grateful.

Let's end on this high note of open collaboration but stay tuned for future reports of obfuscation at play. If nothing else, it makes for great podcast fodder.

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## LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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# HEARING SCHEDULE

For the week of April 14, 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, APRIL 14

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

LD 1263 *An Act Regarding Penalties for Fentanyl Trafficking When That Trafficking Results in an Overdose Causing Serious Bodily Injury of a Person*

1:00 p.m.

LD 1288 *An Act to Amend Certain Provisions of Maine's Drug Laws Regarding Heroin, Fentanyl and Cocaine*

**Environment & Natural Resources**  
Room 216, Cross Building, 10:00 a.m.  
Tel: 287-4149

LD 269 *Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 375: No Adverse Environmental Effect Standards of the Site Location of Development Act, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Environmental Protection*

LD 1458 *An Act Regarding Compensation Fees and Related Conservation Efforts for Solar and Wind Energy Development and High-impact Electric Transmission Lines Under the Site Location of Development Laws*

12:00 p.m.

LD 383 *An Act to Facilitate the Consolidation of the Department of Environmental Protection and the Maine Land Use Planning Commission into a Single Combined Entity*

LD 1111 *An Act to Provide Water Service Infrastructure to Fairfield Residents Affected by Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances*

LD 1507 *An Act to Require General Public Notification of Oil Terminal Facility Transfer Activities*

**Health & Human Services**  
Room 209, Cross Building, 10:00 a.m.  
Tel: 287-1317

LD 1487 *An Act to Support Community Violence Prevention and Intervention Programs*

1:00 p.m.

LD 1367 *Resolve, to Study Methods of Gradually Transitioning Individuals from Government Assistance Programs to the Workforce*

LD 1416 *An Act to Require the Department of Health and Human Services to Immediately Take Custody of Persons Sentenced to Mental Health Facilities That May Not Include County or Regional Jails*

**Judiciary**  
Room 438, State House, 10:00 a.m.  
Tel: 287-1327

LD 1344 *An Act to Improve the Response Time to Tenant Mold Complaints*

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

LD 1372 *An Act to Establish a Special Committee to Review Routine Technical Rules*

LD 1388 *An Act to Replace the Participation Threshold in Votes to Adopt or Alter a Municipal Charter with a Lower Approval Threshold*

LD 1417 *An Act to Strengthen the Authority of Local Officials to Enforce Provisions Regarding Dangerous and Nuisance Properties that Constitute a Threat to Public Health and Safety*

LD 1517 *An Act to Replace Participation Thresholds with Approval Thresholds in Certain School, Municipal and County Measures*

**Veterans & Legal Affairs**  
Room 437, State House, 10:00 a.m.  
Tel: 287-1310

LD 252 *An Act to Withdraw from the National Popular Vote Compact*

## TUESDAY, APRIL 15

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

LD 398 *An Act to Amend the Definition of "Transient Occupancy" in the Laws*

*Governing the Maine Land Use Planning Commission*

LD 1323 *An Act to Prohibit the Use of Neonicotinoid Pesticides and the Use and Sale of Neonicotinoid-treated Seeds*

**Appropriations & Financial Affairs**  
Room 228, State House, 1:00 p.m.  
Tel: 287-1635

LD 351 *An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Build a Warehouse for Goods and Cargo at Bangor International Airport*

LD 836 *An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Upgrade Municipal Culverts at Stream Crossings*

**Health Coverage, Insurance & Financial Services**  
Room 220, Cross Building, 1:00 p.m.  
Tel: 287-1314

LD 1413 *An Act to Amend Laws Governing Hearing Aid Dealers and Health Insurance to Allow an Exemption to Certain Hearing Examination Requirements*

**Housing & Economic Development**  
Room 206, Cross Building, 1:00 p.m.  
Tel: 287-4880

LD 1143 *An Act to Update Language on Setback Variances for Single-family Dwellings and Variances from Dimensional Standards*

LD 1167 *Resolve, to Create a Pilot Program to Assist Nonprofit Housing Developers in Rehabilitating Existing Aging Housing Stock for First-time Home Buyers*

LD 1181 *An Act Regarding the Designation of Short-term Rental Units as Commercial or Residential in Use*

LD 1238 *An Act to Establish a Small-cap Loan Guarantee Program for Affordable Housing Investments*

**Transportation**  
Room 126, State House, 1:00 p.m.  
Tel: 287-4148

LD 1411 *An Act to Modify the Laws Regarding Driver's License Applications*

## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 16

**Energy, Utilities & Technology**  
Room 211, Cross Building, 10:00 a.m.  
Tel: 287-4143

LD 1346 *An Act Regarding the Supply of Water to the Town of New Sharon*

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## Sure, It's Old...But Is It Historic?

At the November 2024 election, voters approved a \$10 million bond to be used for the Maine Historic Preservation Commission (MHPC) to administer a grant program for the restoration of historic community buildings owned by governmental and non-profit agencies. According to the adopted rules for grant administration governed by 27 MRSA § 505-D(2), applicants for these funds must invest awarded revenue on properties identified in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Here is where the snag lies.

Many buildings on the NRHP must follow strict renovation guidelines using specific materials for restoration. One such historic building, Monmouth Academy, which has been used as a school, has been altered through the years to accommodate the changes in the community. While those renovations resulted in the academy being denied for the NRHP designation, it is identified in the town's comprehensive plan as a property with strong historical significance to its residents.

This issue led Sen. Hickman (Kennebec County) to sponsor LD 1282, *An Act Regarding Eligibility for Historic Preservation Bond Proceeds*, on behalf of his constituents. As written, the bill seeks to add properties that have been designated as historic through a municipal historic preservation ordinance as eligible for grant funding. Although this would open the funding to less than 20 additional communities, it would still omit the Monmouth Academy building since the community does not have a historic preservation ordinance in place.

Kristin Sanborn, vice chair of the Monmouth selectboard, testified in support of the bill but offered an amendment that would enable property designated as historic in a municipal comprehensive plan to also be eligible for grant funding. She argued that a comprehensive plan is approved by voters of a community and reflects their values, which should hold weight when relating to historic designations.

MMA and Rep. Greenwood (Wales) also submitted testimony in support of the proposal in the belief that communities should have input into the history their residents value and would like to preserve, while the MHPC testified neither for nor against the proposed measure.

The MHPC representative stressed to the committee that they are bound by law when administering the grant programs and for those reasons welcome the proposed amendment. However, he also cautioned members that just because a building is old, it doesn't mean that it is historic. For a building to be deemed eligible for the NRHP, historical significance must be documented along with the material requirements discussed earlier.

Committee members requested a copy of the original bill that was passed and the wording of the ballot question from the November 2024 election for review at a work session that has yet to be scheduled.

## 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](http://www.memun.org).)

### Health & Human Services

LD 1416 *An Act to Require the Department of Health and Human Services to Immediately Take Custody of Persons Sentenced to Mental Health Facilities That May Not Include County or Regional Jails* (Sponsored by Sen. Talbot Ross of Cumberland Cty.)

This bill requires that when a court commits a defendant to the Commissioner of Health and Human Services for placement in an appropriate mental health institution, that placement must be immediate and may not be in a county or regional jail.

### Housing & Economic Development

LD 1143 *An Act to Update Language on Setback Variances for Single-family Dwellings and Variances from Dimensional Standards* (Sponsored by Sen. Libby of Cumberland Cty.)

This bill changes references to a "single-family dwelling" to a "dwelling" in the law regarding setback variances. The bill also amends the law governing variances from dimensional standards to allow a variance when there is a practical difficulty, and the property is not wholly located within a shoreland area.

LD 1181 *An Act Regarding the Designation of Short-term Rental Units as Commercial or Residential in Use* (Sponsored by Rep. Gere of Kennebunkport) This bill clarifies that a municipality may require the municipal assessor to assign a land use code to a short-term rental unit that designates the rental unit as commercial in use or residential in use. The bill also defines "commercial in use" as a short-term rental unit that is not claimed as the primary residence of the owner and a "residential in use" as a short-term rental unit that is

claimed as the primary residence of the owner.

LD 1226 *An Act to Protect Consumers by Licensing Residential Building Contractors* (Sponsored by Rep. Roberts of South Berwick)

This bill establishes the nine-member Residential Construction Board, which includes a municipal code enforcement officer, directed to establish licensing requirements for residential general contractors, as well as practice standards that are consistent with the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code.

### Judiciary

LD 1344 *An Act to Improve the Response Time to Tenant Mold Complaints* (Sponsored by Sen. Libby of Cumberland Cty.)

Within 90 days of notice, this bill requires local health officers to investigate complaints of non-surface mold in tenant-occupied units. The bill also provides that if the investigation finds an unhealthy level of non-surface mold, remediation efforts must be initiated by the landlord within five business days of the investigation and requires a local health officer to determine if all surface mold has been remediated. Finally, the bill provides that a tenant may file a complaint under the implied warranty and covenant of habitability laws if the landlord fails to remediate the mold issue within 60 days of the report.

### Labor

LD 406 *An Act to Repeal the Laws Providing for Paid Family and Medical Leave and to Reimburse Taxpayers* (Emergency) (Sponsored by Rep. Morris of Turner)

Retroactive to October 25, 2023, this emergency bill repeals the Paid Family and Medical Leave Act; directs the Department of Labor to refund employers for contributions made to the fund; and requires employers to return to employees related payroll deductions.

LD 1333 *An Act to Make Changes to the Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program* (Sponsored by Rep. Poirier of Skowhegan)

This bill makes the following changes to the paid family and medical leave benefits program, it: (1) requires an employee to be employed with

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# HEARING SCHEDULE (cont'd)

For the week of April 14, 2025

**Environment & Natural Resources  
Room 216, Cross Building, 10:00 a.m.  
Tel: 287-4149**

LD 920 *Resolve, to Review Efficiencies in the Licensing of Solid Waste Disposal Facilities by the Department of Environmental Protection*

LD 1065 *An Act Regarding the Reduction and Recycling of Food Waste*

**Health Coverage, Insurance & Financial Services  
Room 220, Cross Building, 10:00 a.m.  
Tel: 287-1314**

LD 180 *An Act Regarding the Interactions of Pharmacy Benefits Managers and So-called 340B Entities and Reimbursements by Pharmacy Benefits Managers to Pharmacies*

LD 1018 *An Act to Protect Health Care for Rural and Underserved Areas by Prohibiting Discrimination by Participants in a Federal Drug Discount Program*

**Labor  
Room 202, Cross Building, 10:00 a.m.  
Tel: 287-1331**

LD 406 *An Act to Repeal the Laws Providing for Paid Family and Medical Leave and to Reimburse Taxpayers*

LD 539 *An Act to Repeal the Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program*

LD 575 *An Act to Ensure Equitable Access to the Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program by Removing the Requirement That Leave Must Be Scheduled to Prevent Undue Hardship on the Employer*

LD 894 *An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Paid Family and Medical Leave*

LD 952 *An Act to Exempt Agricultural Employers and Employees from the Maine Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program*

LD 1169 *An Act Regarding Employer Payments for the Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program*

LD 1221 *RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Prohibit the Legislature from Using Paid Family and Medical Leave Program Funds for Any Other Purpose*

LD 1249 *An Act to Delay Payment of Benefits Under the Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program*

LD 1273 *An Act to Make Paid Family and Medical Leave Voluntary*

LD 1307 *An Act to Suspend the Remittance Obligation for Paid Family and Medical Leave Private Plan Users*

LDL 1333 *An Act to Make Changes to the Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program*

LD 1400 *An Act to Exempt Certain Public School Districts and Their Employees from the Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Program*

**Taxation  
Room 127, State House, 1:00 p.m.  
Tel: 287-1552**

LD 1419 *An Act to Provide a Sales Tax Exemption for Housing Constructed Off-site Similar to That for On-site Construction*

**Veterans & Legal Affairs  
Room 437, State House, 10:00 a.m.  
Tel: 287-1310**

LD 1422 *An Act Regarding Open Primary Elections and Ranked-choice Voting*

LD 1431 *An Act to Implement an Interstate Voter Registration Cross-check Program*

LD 1527 *An Act to Require Postage Prepaid Envelopes Be Provided for the Return of Absentee Ballots*

## THURSDAY, APRIL 17

**Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry  
Room 214, Cross Building, 1:30 p.m.  
Tel: 287-1312**

LD 1525 *An Act to Promote Firewood Banks in Maine*

LD 1529 *An Act to Enhance the Protection of High-value Natural Resources Statewide*

**Appropriations & Financial Affairs  
Room 228, State House, 1:00 p.m.  
Tel: 287-1635**

LD 363 *An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Create the School Capital Improvement Fund*

LD 826 *An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Establish the School Energy Savings Revolving Loan Fund*

**3:00 p.m.**

LD 1521 *An Act to Require All State Agencies to Provide a Zero-based Budget Once Every 10 Years*

**Criminal Justice & Public Safety  
Room 436, State House, 2:00 p.m.  
Tel: 287-1122**

LD 740 *An Act to Establish a Comprehensive Program to Divert Youth from the Criminal Justice System and Address Their Needs*

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

LD 35 *An Act to Strengthen Local Emergency Medical Services by Increasing the MaineCare Reimbursement Rate for Ambulance Services*

LD 1429 *An Act to Provide Full Reimbursement for Emergency Ambulance Services Provided to MaineCare Members*

**Health Coverage, Insurance & Financial Services  
Room 220, Cross Building, 1:00 p.m.  
Tel: 287-1314**

LD 1401 *An Act to Repeal the Provisions of Law Requiring Motor Vehicle Liability Insurance Policies to Cover the Cost of Towing and Storing Certain Vehicles*

**Housing & Economic Development  
Room 206, Cross Building, 1:15 p.m.  
Tel: 287-4880**

LD 1226 *An Act to Protect Consumers by Licensing Residential Building Contractors*

LD 1232 *An Act to Require Radon Testing for Certain Commercial and Residential Construction*

**Marine Resources  
Room 202, Cross Building, 1:00 p.m.  
Tel: 287-1337**

LD 1595 *An Act to Strengthen Working Waterfronts Against Nuisance Complaints Regarding Aquaculture*



## IN THE HOPPER (cont'd)

an employer for 120 days before being eligible to take leave; (2) allows employers to have intermittent leave schedules reviewed by the program administrator; (3) prohibits the taking of paid leave unless the employee simultaneously takes any available unpaid leave; (4) reduces the retroactive application deadline from 90 days to 30 days; (5) requires the program administrator to give five days' notice of an employee's leave being approved; (6) requires the Department of Labor to post on its publicly accessible website the dates by which contribution reports and premiums must be remitted as well as appropriate tax forms that employers with approved private plans must provide to employees taking leave; (7) relieves employers with collective bargaining agreements of the obligation to bargain over the employee's share of the premium; (8) allows employers to correct mistakes in the employee share of taxes for up to three months; (9) establishes a 52-week formula for calculating the 15-employee threshold; (10) changes the applications of penalties against employers from mandatory to discretionary; (11) clarifies that an employee who is taking retroactive paid leave and did not notify the employer for more than five days of the employee's absence is not entitled to be restored to the employee's former position; and (12) clarifies that at no time may an employee receive benefits of over 100% of the employee's wages.

### State & Local Government

LD 1388 *An Act to Replace the Participation Threshold in Votes to Adopt or Alter a Municipal Charter with a Lower Approval Threshold* (Sponsored by Rep. Bridgeo of Augusta)

This bill provides that for a new municipal charter, revision, modification or amendment to become effective, the number of votes cast in favor of the question must equal or exceed 15% of the total votes cast in the municipality

at the last gubernatorial election. Currently, the threshold requires that the total number of votes cast equals or exceeds 30% of the total votes cast in the municipality at the last gubernatorial election.

LD 1417 *An Act to Strengthen the Authority of Local Officials to Enforce Provisions Regarding Dangerous and Nuisance Properties that Constitute a Threat to Public Health and Safety* (Sponsored by Sen. Libby of Cumberland Cty.)

This bill expands the authority of local municipal health and code enforcement officials to enforce laws pertaining to properties that are dangerous, nuisance or abandoned and that constitute a threat to public health or safety.

LD 1517 *An Act to Replace Participation Thresholds with Approval Thresholds in Certain School, Municipal and County Measures* (Sponsored by Rep. Sato of Gorham)

This bill reduces voter participation thresholds necessary for the result of the vote to be valid that impacts school, county, municipal, local electric districts and sanitary districts, including reducing the percentage of total votes cast in the previous gubernatorial election for withdrawing from a regional school unit; bonds issued by county commissioners for economic development; new, revised, modified or amended charters; the appointment of a single assessor; municipal revenue bonds; creation of an urban renewal authority, and deorganization, to name a few.

### Veterans & Legal Affairs

LD 1527 *An Act to Require Postage Prepaid Envelopes Be Provided for the Return of Absentee Ballots* (Sponsored by Sen. Bennett of Oxford Cty.)

This bill requires the Secretary of State to provide municipalities with postage prepaid return envelopes along with absentee ballots.