

Weekly Review of Legislative Agenda

Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry

LD 362 - Resolve, Directing the Dept. of Conservation to acquire an easement to provide access to the Dead River

MFPC Opposed. This bill was voted Ought Not to Pass with little discussion

LURC Update:

The ACF Committee was presented with draft language which was prepared by Commissioner Bill Beardsley, Sarah Medina, and ACF legal analyst Jill Ippoliti. Sen. Schneider vehemently objected to the process with which the language was drafted because Commissioner Beardsley is a member of the Executive Branch. The committee voted to send the language to the Revisor's office to be drafted into a bill. The public hearing for the new bill will be scheduled in mid-February.

Energy, Utilities, and Technology

LD 1644 – An Act to Expand the Availability of Natural Gas to Maine Residents

This bill sets rules for the issuance of bonds for energy distribution projects involving natural gas as well as minimum and maximum capital reserve requirements. Works sessions are currently being scheduled.

LD 1706 – An Act to Protect Maine's Biomass and Forest Products Industries by allowing Biomass Generators to Enter into Short-Term Contracts

MFPC is participating in discussions and coordinating with other associations, but we don't believe this bill has broad support at this time.

Environment and Natural Resources

LD 1648 – An Act to Clarify the Site Location of Development Laws Regarding Exemptions for Previously Developed Sites

Current law states that developments "in existence, authorized, licensed or under construction prior to specified dates are exempted" from site law. This bill states that modification to such developments, specifically military bases, remain exempt and will not trigger full site law. The bill was tabled.

Labor, Commerce, Research, and Economic Development

LD 1383 – An Act to improve the process by which Logging Contractors Hire Legal Foreign Workers

This bill deals with the hiring of Canadian Bonded labor and has been tabled and will most likely be rescheduled for the week of Jan. 23rd. We are participating in discussions on alternative approaches and we will keep the membership posted of future developments and request your help as the issue unfolds.

LD 1665 – Resolve, To Direct the Department of Economic and Community Development to Convene a Task Force to Bolster and Expand Exports of Maine Products and Services

Commissions a study to determine the most effective means to increase Maine's value added exports.

DECD opposes bill, claims it duplicates work being done by the Maine International Trade Center

State and Local Government

LD 1596 – An Act to Amend the Laws Governing Discontinued Town Ways

This bill deals with allowing municipalities to place restrictions on discontinued town ways which are classified as public easements. The committee acknowledged the complicated nature of this issue and may seek to establish a study group. The 1st work session for this bill will be Jan 25th at 1pm and we will continue to monitor.

Taxation

LD 849 – An Act to Provide Tax Relief for Maine's Citizens by Reducing Income Taxes

This bill was voted ONTP and is dead

LD 1470 - An Act to Ensure Harvesting of Timber on Land Taxed under the Maine Tree Growth Tax Law Program

Senator Raye introduced this bill to address growing industry and municipal concerns that land in tree growth, particularly on the coast, is not being harvested as intended under the law. There is currently no language for this bill. We are working with SWOAM to establish reasonable modifications and we will be closely monitoring progress through the work sessions.

Transportation

LD 1367 – An Act to Restore Maine's Secondary Roads

This bill seeks to create a fund dedicated to secondary road capital investments. Funds would be raised through cost saving measures at the DOT and an increase of fees on items such as vanity license plates. The bill has been tabled and awaits a second work session.

LD 1617– An Act to Ensure the Alignment of Truck Weight Limitations on the Interstate with Those Allowed under Federal Law

This bill would allow the DOT to adopt rules to ensure the new 100,000 lb interstate federal truck weight limit correctly implemented. While intended as a housekeeping measure, there has been discussion of a broader bill and we will continue to monitor.

[For more information on any legislation please contact Jon Metrick at 622-9288.](#)