

January 16, 2020

## Maine transportation department unveils \$2.6 billion, 3-year work plan

## LD 602 would make a long-term commitment to supporting research and development in Maine

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The following article was written by Steve Mistler of Maine Public and aired on All Things Considered with Nora Flaherty on Tuesday, January 14. It can be read online at <https://www.mainepublic.org/post/maine-transportation-department-unveils-26-billion-3-year-work-plan>. We have reprinted it here for your review and consideration.

The Maine Department of Transportation released a three-year work plan that includes more than 2,000 projects worth nearly \$2.6 billion. It also contains something else: a plea to state lawmakers to help the department fill a project backlog spurred by higher construction costs, workforce shortages and chronic underfunding.

The cry for more money is nothing new, but it's increasingly desperate as MDOT officials issue dire warnings of a slow march toward a system failure.

The driveway and parking at Maine DOT's north Augusta facility is pocked with potholes, some temporarily patched up but deteriorating, and at least one large enough to bottom-out a small car. It was a fitting venue for Tuesday's press conference, in which Maine DOT Commissioner Bruce Van Note repeatedly emphasized a message that's woven throughout the agency's new, 280-page work plan.

"I'm not one for hyperbole and I'm not one to use the word 'crisis.' It's just not how I'm wired. We're engineers by nature. We just address what we have, but this level of funding is not sustainable," he says.

Sustainable funding for Maine's

sprawling network of state highways, bridges, railways and ports has been an issue for years. It's been exacerbated by a combination of State House politics and challenges brought by newer, fuel efficient and electric cars that have diminished the gas tax revenues that help fund Maine's transportation system.

The MDOT has pressed for more federal one-time grants, and Maine voters have approved hundreds of millions of dollars in transportation bonds.

Van Note says it's still not enough.

"Maine DOT is essentially a great machine that knows how to produce good work at a good price, but we are running low on fuel," he says.

The department's three-year work plan spends \$150 million more than its predecessor, but on 142 fewer projects. And some of those projects are like the pothole patches in its own north Augusta parking lot — temporary solutions that are labeled as such in the work plan.

"Here are the titles: Light capital paving. Ultra-thin wearing surface. What are we doing? We're taking that peanut butter pavement and spreading it as thin

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The following testimony was delivered by Megan Diver on behalf of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce in support of LD 602, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Support Research and Development in Maine, at a public hearing held on Tuesday, January 14, 2020, before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs. We have reprinted it here for your review.

Senator Breen, Representative Gattine, distinguished members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee: I am Megan Diver, senior government relations specialist at the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, a statewide business association representing both large and small businesses across the state. The Maine State Chamber of Commerce is also proud to be a co-leader of the MaineSpark Coalition, which is dedicated to achieving the state goal that 60 percent of Maine adults will hold a credential of value by 2025.

I am pleased to be here before you today to talk about the Chamber's support for LD 602 and the how important Research and Development investment is to Maine's economy and businesses. The Chamber supports policies and priorities

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**About the Maine State Chamber of Commerce:** Since 1889, the Maine State Chamber has been fighting to lower your cost of doing business. Through our Grassroots Action Network and OneVoice program, we work with a network of approximately 5,000 companies statewide who see the value in such a service and provide the financial support that keeps our access, advocacy, and assistance efforts going strong. As Maine's Chamber, we make sure that the business environment of the state continues to thrive. The Maine State Chamber of Commerce advocates on behalf of their interests before the legislature and regulatory agencies and through conferences, seminars, and affiliated programs.

## **LD 602... (Continued from Page 1...)**

that help Maine businesses prosper and our economy to flourish to make Maine as competitive as possible. Research and development (R&D) will play a vital role in Maine's economic future.

Maine remains reliant on industries that are expected to be stagnant or lose jobs over the next decade. R&D is important to existing companies in Maine and especially important to new Maine companies. R&D is important across many business sectors; manufacturing, biotechnology, software development, engineering, pharmaceutical and many more. Today, Maine businesses compete globally. R&D is crucial to any company developing their own product(s) and critical to innovation to help companies bring forth new products and services. It's necessary for companies to stay ahead of the com-

petition, at all times, and continued R&D investments ensure this is possible. Investments in R&D creates business opportunities, high-wage jobs, and tax revenues through development of new products and improvements in the current technology of existing businesses.

According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Innovation has long been recognized as an important driver of economic growth. New ideas can spark wave upon wave of new goods and services that literally transforms an economy, making it robust and vibrant."

The Chamber urges the committee to support LD 602 and make a long-term commitment to support research and development in Maine. Maine is far behind where we need to be in funding for research and development, and it will take a significant investment to achieve long-term success.

Thank you. ☐

## **DOT Work Plan... (Continued from Page 1...)**

as we can to get as many miles going to hold it together," Van Note says.

He describes the work plan as managing a slow decline in Maine's transportation system.

It contains 148 bridge projects and 171 miles of highway construction and rehabilitation as well as funding for other projects.

But it also relies on an uncertainty: \$300 million in bonding over the next three years that must first be approved by the Legislature and, then, Maine voters.

And even if that bonding occurs the work plan has a \$230 million project shortfall.

A special transportation task force has proposed adding taxes and fees, which are unpopular with some lawmakers.

Paul Koziell, president of CPM Construction in Freeport, served on the

task force and says he doesn't understand that position.

"Many of these same folks fail to appreciate the urgency and immediacy of this problem and do not have the political courage to take the necessary steps to resolve this funding shortfall," he says.

Maine isn't the only state confronting the transportation funding problem, but other states have moved faster to address it.

Since 2013, 27 states have increased gas taxes or added long-term funding sources, according to a database published by the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Maine's last gas tax increase was in 2011, the same year the Republican-controlled Legislature eliminated the indexing that hikes the tax with inflation.

The prospect of an increase during an election year appears unlikely, leaving Van Note calling for what he describes as a "nonpartisan solution." ☐

## Governor Mills announces decisions on remaining held bills

On Friday, January 10, Governor Janet Mills announced that she is allowing 24 of the remaining 27 bills she held for further review last session to become law and that she has vetoed three.

Governor Mills vetoed the following bills: **LD 553**, *An Act To Ensure Proper Oversight of Sports Betting in the State*; **LD 517**, *An Act To Facilitate Fair Ballot Representation for All Candidates*; and **LD 268**, *An Act To Create a Credit under the Commercial Forestry Excise Tax for Landowners Using Businesses Based in the United States*.

With respect to LD 553, Governor Mills wrote in her veto message that she respected the many hours of work members of the Legislature put into the bill but continued, “respectfully, I remain unconvinced at this time that the majority of Maine people are ready to legalize, support, endorse and promote betting on competitive athletic event.”

“Before Maine joins the frenzy of states hungry to attract this market, I believe we need to examine the issue more clearly; better understand the evolving experiences of other states; and thoughtfully determine the best approach for Maine,” Governor Mills wrote. “That approach needs to balance the desire to suppress gambling activities now being conducted illegally and the need to protect youthful gamblers and those least able to absorb losses under a closely regulated scheme.”

Additionally, Governor Mills allowed the following bills to become law without her signature. In doing so, she also sent letters to lawmakers conveying concerns regarding LD 54, LD 793, and LD 1104. They are:

- ♦ **LD 54**, *An Act To Limit the Influence of Lobbyists by Expanding the Prohibition on Accepting Political Contributions*;
- ♦ **LD 545**, *An Act To Ban Child Marriage*;
- ♦ **LD 793**, *An Act To Improve*

*Accountability of Opioid Manufacturers*;

- ♦ **LD 833**, *An Act To Provide the Same Retirement Benefits for State Employees Working in Law Enforcement as Are Provided to Law Enforcement Officers*;
- ♦ **LD 866**, *An Act To Support College Completion by Homeless Youth in Maine*;
- ♦ **LD 1036**, *Resolve, Establishing a Task Force To Study the Creation of a Comprehensive Career and Technical Education System To Support Workforce Development*;
- ♦ **LD 1104**, *An Act To Clarify the State’s Commitments Concerning Certain Public Service Retirement Benefits*;
- ♦ **LD 1207**, *An Act To Expand the 1998 Special Retirement Plan To Include Detectives in the Office of Investigations within the Department of the Secretary of State, Bureau of Motor Vehicles*;
- ♦ **LD 1208**, *An Act To Expand the 1998 Special Retirement Plan To Include Detectives in the Office of the Attorney General*;
- ♦ **LD 1249**, *An Act To Prohibit the Abuse and Isolation of Older and Dependent Adults*;
- ♦ **LD 1311**, *An Act Regarding the Sale of Dogs and Cats at Pet Shops*;
- ♦ **LD 1386**, *An Act Regarding the Determination of the Prevailing Wage Rate for Public Works Projects*;
- ♦ **LD 1399**, *An Act To Improve Oral Health and Access to Dental Care for Maine Children*;
- ♦ **LD 1442**, *An Act To Provide for Court-appointed Advocates for Justice in Animal Cruelty Cases*;
- ♦ **LD 1518**, *An Act To Establish a Fund for Portions of the Operations and Outreach*

**Continued on Page 4...**

## Governor Mills announces new rebates for Maine people and businesses to install high-performance heat pumps

**Next step in “100,000 heat pumps” initiative expected to help create jobs, reduce reliance on fossil fuels, and save Maine people money on heating bills**

Joined by leaders from Efficiency Maine Trust, Hometown Heat Pumps, and the Maine Community College System at F.W. Webb Company in Augusta, Governor Janet Mills announced on January 14 that Maine was doubling its rebates to help Maine people purchase high-performance heat pumps.

The new, aggressive incentives are the next step in advancing the Governor’s 100,000 heat pump initiative, which the Governor proposed and signed into law last year, and which establishes the goal of installing 100,000 heat pumps in Maine homes and businesses by 2025. The initiative, which does not use state taxpayer funds, will maintain the state’s trajectory as a national leader in beneficial electrification – replacing high-carbon fossil fuels with cleaner electricity – while lowering heating bills and creating quality jobs.

“These new rebates will help make high-performance heat pumps more attainable for more Maine people, and the effects of this initiative will ripple across Maine’s economy,” said Governor Mills. “Not only will it help create good-paying jobs, boost small businesses, and promote

**Continued on Page 4...**

## Action on Held Bills... (Continued from Page 3...)

*Activities of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Diagnostic and Research Laboratory and To Increase Statewide Enforcement of Pesticide Use;*

- ♦ **LD 1550**, *An Act To Create a Victims' Compensation Fund for Victims of Property Crimes;*
- ♦ **LD 1597**, *An Act To Provide a Sales Tax Exemption for Purchases Made by Nonprofit Seasonal Camps;*
- ♦ **LD 1718**, *An Act To Exempt Purchases by Pet Food Pantries from Sales Tax;*
- ♦ **LD 1808**, *An Act To Provide a Sales Tax Exemption for Certain Nonprofit Charitable Organizations;*
- ♦ **LD 1700**, *Resolve, To Promote the Inclusion of African-American History and Culture in the Curricular Offerings of School Administrative Units;*
- ♦ **LD 1756**, *An Act To Improve Public Safety through Coordinated Reentry of Prisoners into the Community;*
- ♦ **LD 1809**, *Resolve, To Increase Funding for Evidence-based Therapies for Treating Emotional and Behavioral Problems in Children; and,*
- ♦ **LD 1838**, *Resolve, Requiring the Department of Health and Human Services To Examine Options for Upper Payment Limit Adjustments for MaineCare Services.*

Earlier this week, Governor Mills announced that the Legislature recalled 13 bills from her desk for further consideration or drafting clarification. With this announcement, Governor Mills has taken action on all pending legislation on her desk. The Governor had until Saturday, January 11, 2020, which is three days after the opening of session, not including the first day, to either veto or to allow any held bills to become law without her signature. □

## Heat Pumps...

(Continued from Page 3...)

workforce training at our community colleges, but it will also help Maine people save money on their heating bills and reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, helping us protect our environment and fight climate change. I encourage Maine people to see what they are eligible for.”

The new suite of rebates, which took effect on January 1, 2020, is aimed at helping Maine people and businesses install high-performance heat pumps. The so-called Tier 2 rebate, which applies to the most advanced high-performance heat pump installations meeting new Efficiency Maine requirements, is doubling from \$500 to \$1,000 for the first indoor unit installed and from \$250 to \$500 for the second unit. Heat pumps meeting the so-called Tier 1 rebate standards will continue to be eligible for a \$500 rebate for the first indoor unit and \$250 for a second indoor or outdoor unit, as in prior years. Additionally, enhanced \$2,000 rebates are also now available to homeowners who receive heating assistance through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

“Seven years into our programs promoting this new generation of heat pumps, specially designed for cold winters, we continue to see growth in consumer demand which tells us these new models really work well, even when it’s freezing outside,” said Michael Stoddard, Efficiency Maine’s Executive Director. “With these new rebates, Maine now has the opportunity to accelerate demand for heat pumps, maintaining its trajectory as a national leader in displacing high-carbon fossil fuels with cleaner electricity while lowering heating bills at the same time.”

According to Efficiency Maine Trust, a high-performance heat pump can help an average Maine home reduce its oil con-

sumption by 270-540 gallons per year; reduce its carbon emissions by an estimated 3,600-7,250 pounds per year per home per high-performance heat pump; and, when the initiative is fully realized, can save Maine people between a total of \$30-\$60 million annually, providing an important boost to the local economy.

Hometown Heat Pumps – a family-owned business in Burnham – and one of its several suppliers, F.W. Webb, are two of the more than 400 businesses that form the supply chain serving heat pump customers in Maine. Across the state, these businesses have begun increasing capacity to serve their customers and meet the growing demand from the new rebates, which means more quality jobs and a growing demand for training programs like those offered by the Maine Community College System, supply houses, manufacturers, and trade associations such as the Maine Energy Marketers Association.

“Customer service has been our top priority along with helping our customers save substantially on heating and cooling costs,” said Christie Whitcomb, Owner of Hometown Heat Pumps. “This has allowed us to grow quickly and become a leader in the heat pump industry.”

“This sort of initiative is why we remain focused on providing critical, relevant workforce training at the community colleges,” said David Daigler, President of the Maine Community College System. “As industries and policies shift, we adjust our programs to make sure students and trainees are learning the latest techniques and technologies to keep up with industry needs.”

Governor Mills signed into law LD 1766, sponsored by Senator Mark Lawrence, last June. □

## **“Five on the Future” panel: Collaboration, flexibility keys to Maine economic success**

**EDITOR’S NOTE:** The following article was written by Maureen Milliken and published in *Mainebiz* on Wed., January 8, 2020. It can be read online at <https://www.mainebiz.biz/article/five-on-the-future-panel-collaboration-flexibility-keys-to-maine-economic-success>. We have reprinted it here for your review and consideration.

Whether it’s real estate, retail or construction, or economic development in general, industry insiders at the *Mainebiz* “Five on the Future” panel on Tuesday, January 7 agreed that the key to the state’s economic success is collaboration and flexibility.

Some 250 people attended the annual breakfast event, which was keynoted by Jeffrey C. Fuhrer, executive vice president and senior policy advisor at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston.

Fuhrer also moderated a panel that included Heather Johnson, commissioner of the state Department of Economic and Community Development; Justin Lamontagne, partner with NAI The Dunham Group; Topher Mallory, CEO of Mexicali Blues; and Deirdre Wadsworth, president of Hardypond Construction.

The challenges presented by Maine’s aging workforce and the need to train and attract younger workers dominated the discussion. Panelists also discussed the effects of tariffs and trade policies on business, how to address the state’s housing issues, and other topics in the hour-long discussion.

### **Workforce collaborations, flexibility...**

Lamontagne said that a focus on new technology in the state’s universities and business partnerships is having an impact.

An example, he said, is Navatek, a marine research and manufacturing company that is a real estate client of NAI The Dunham Group. The company, located in Portland, recently opened a second office in Bangor as it attracts young professionals graduating from the University of Maine’s marine engineering program.

He said it’s a public-private partnership success story that’s not only helping the company, but also keeping young workers in Maine. “It’s kind of hard to stay in Maine sometimes if you’re 23, 24 years old,” he said.

Wadsworth said a partnership with New Ventures, a nonprofit training program that introduces girls to jobs in the trades, will have long-term effects. She said young women learn there are well-paying jobs available that they may not have considered, and it also offers a non-traditional learning environment for those who want an alternative to the classroom.

Mallory said unconventional partnerships with other food producers have helped as he launched two new businesses, Split Rock Distilling and Royal Rose Syrups. More than that, collaboration among businesses has helped create a vibrant town center in Newcastle.

### **Connecting with the workforce...**

The panel, responding to questions that also touched on job training and the workforce, said the same collaborative, flexible approach applies.

Johnson said the state has learned a lot from the private sector. “They saw it coming,” she said, of the workforce crisis. Talking to students before they graduate about job opportunities and paying for training are big lessons learned from the private sector. She said another was forging connections with the community college and university systems, which are playing a big role in moving students into jobs.

Johnson noted the state’s goal to bring 75,000 new workers into the state, but said the focus also has to be on what older workers can offer and how to help the state’s 100,000 unemployed residents find a place in the workforce.

### **Tariffs, trade policies...**

Rising costs from federal tariffs and trade policies have had an impact on businesses, from pushing up costs to slowdowns caused by uncertainty on both the production and consumer ends, the panel said.

**Continued on Page 6...**

## **Maine State Chamber testifies in support of bill to require Maine Revenue Services to value certain property related to energy projects**

On Tuesday, January 21, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce will be testifying in strong support of **LD 1898, An Act Regarding Property Taxes on Certain Energy Generation Projects**. Sponsored by Sen. Heather Sanborn (D-Cumberland), the bill would require Maine Revenue Services (MRS) to value property of an energy generation project that is located partially in the unorganized territory and partially in organized territory, and to allocate the value to the organized territory appropriately.

The concept of requiring MRS to value large industrial property is something the Maine State Chamber has always supported. Valuing large industrial property such as that associated with energy projects is very complicated. MRS has the expertise to value these properties appropriately and fairly across the board, avoiding wide variations or discrepancies of value for the same property from municipality to municipality.

Rep. Steve Stanley (D-Medway) had a similar bill in last session, which the Maine State Chamber supported. His bill would have required, among other things, that MRS determine the value of large industrial property over \$10 million. In addition, this bill also allowed a municipality to pursue the same fair course of action afforded a taxpayer when appealing a value, that is to take their case before the State Board of Appeals.

If you have any questions, please contact Linda Caprara by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 106, or by emailing [lcaprara@mainechamber.org](mailto:lcaprara@mainechamber.org). □

## Five on the Future...

(Continued from Page 5...)

Mallory said he's surprised at the disconnect he sees in consumers. "There's a lack of understanding [that tariffs and trade policies] are going to affect them," he said.

He said, too, the fact there's little lead time on wholesale product costs adds to the difficulty. "One container [with the same item] could be five minutes behind the other one, and prices can be 25% different," he said.

Lamontagne said high construction prices caused in part by tariffs have slowed construction of new buildings, increasing inventory issues. Those looking for industrial or commercial space are sitting back and hoping something will open up, because they don't trust the uncertainty of new construction.

Wadsworth, too, stressed the uncertainty trade issues are causing, with "crazy" and rapid price hikes. It takes several months to design and get permits for a construction project, and materials prices can change drastically in that time.

"We don't know what's going to hap-

pen," she said. "It's really challenging."

### Housing...

Those same challenges have had an impact on the already tight housing market in the state.

Wadsworth said that, with high construction costs, it's hard to make the cost of each unit work with rent restrictions required for affordable housing. Beyond that, "It's hard to make market-rate work," she said.

Johnson said, too, that when the state's bigger population centers are taken out of the mix, there's property available but it's often aging or remote, and "doesn't meet the needs of the workforce."

She said that housing is still a valuable investment, but the concept of what it is has to evolve.

### One thing to make a difference...

During the audience question segment, Paula Mahoney, owner of Words at Work, asked the panel what one thing those in the audience could do to make a difference this year.

"Think about the unconscious narrative" about people you don't know and

who may be different, Fuhrer said. Get to know someone who's different, and "the narrative will change."

Lamontagne suggested attending events, talking with other attendees and "getting to know people, meeting and talking to people with an open mind."

Mallory said that community events, like the now-defunct Old Port Festival, bring people together to enjoy each other's company and have fun, and are an important part of downtown vitality. He said that type of event is being lost with the current focus on "retail-tainment."

Wadsworth said that people should "ask the hard questions of each other." For instance, she said, why isn't there more gender diversity in the construction business? "By talking to each other, maybe something can come out of it."

Johnson encouraged those in the room to bring someone into their business to see how it works and help open career options that they may not have considered.

"My parents were public school teachers. I knew I didn't want to be a school teacher, but I didn't know what was out there," she said. Letting students know what's out there will "keep them from taking the path of least resistance." □

## 2020 Business Day at the Statehouse

**Thursday, March 12, 2020**

**8:00 am to Noon**

**Hall of Flags, Second Floor,  
Maine Statehouse, Augusta**

**Employers and employees  
welcome ... PLEASE JOIN US!**

You are invited to the Maine State Chamber of Commerce's annual Business Day at the Statehouse on Thursday, March 12, 2020, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the Hall of Flags (Statehouse, Second Floor).

Business Day at the Statehouse provides a prime opportunity for our members, and their employees, to discuss business issues and priorities with legislators and state government officials, as we work together to strengthen Maine's economy and keep Maine competitive. Participants have the unique opportunity to connect face-to-face with legislators. Employers often use this time to emphasize the importance of preserving and retaining existing jobs, strengthening Maine's economy through the creation of new opportunities, and keeping Maine businesses competitive in today's economy.

With your participation, the "Voice of Maine Business" will resonate throughout Augusta! We anticipate another great turnout this year! If you have additional questions, please email [lcaprara@mainechamber.org](mailto:lcaprara@mainechamber.org). □



# Public Hearings

Public hearings are open to everyone. This public hearing schedule is subject to change. Questions may be directed to the Secretary of the Senate's Office at (207) 287-1540. For the most current schedule, please visit <http://legislature.maine.gov/committee/#Committees> or contact the committee clerk.

## Tuesday, January 21, 2020

### **Energy, Utilities and Technology**

**1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 211**

**LD 1563**, *An Act To Encourage the Development of Broadband Coverage in Rural Maine* (Sen. Bellows of Kennebec)

### **Taxation**

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

**LD 1898**, *An Act Regarding Property Taxes on Certain Energy Generation Projects* (Sen. Sanborn of Cumberland)

**LD 1929**, *Resolve, Establishing the Commission To Study Fair, Equitable and Competitive Tax Policy for Maine's Working Families and Small Businesses* (Rep. Fecteau of Biddeford)

## Wednesday, January 22, 2020

### **Education and Cultural Affairs**

**10:00 a.m.; Cross Building, Room 208**

**LD 1916**, *An Act To Increase High School Graduation Rates for Students Experiencing Homelessness or in Foster Care* (Sen. Libby of Androscoggin)

### **Labor and Housing**

**9:30 a.m.; Cross Building, Room 202**

**LD 1911**, *An Act To Amend the Unemployment Compensation Laws* (Sen. Bellows of Kennebec)

**LD 1986**, *An Act To Clarify the Law Protecting Job Applicants from Identity Theft* (Sen. Bellows of Kennebec)

## Thursday, January 23, 2020

### **Energy, Utilities and Technology**

**1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 211**

**LD 1748**, *An Act To Allow for the Establishment of Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy Programs* (Sen. Sanborn of Cumberland)

**LD 1896**, *An Act To Authorize Separate Alternative Compliance Payment Rates for Maine's Renewable Portfolio Standard and To Amend the Laws Governing Thermal Renewable Energy Credits* (Sen. Vitelli of Sagadahoc)

### **Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business**

**1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 202**

**LD 2004**, *An Act To Provide for the 2020 and 2021 Allocations of the State Ceiling on Private Activity Bonds* (Sen. Herbig of Waldo)

### **Taxation**

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

**LD 1993**, *An Act To Clarify the Law Relating to Corporate Income Tax Nexus and the Shipment of Spirits into the State* (Sen. Sanborn of Cumberland)

## Friday, January 24, 2020

### **Environment and Natural Resources**

**12:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 216**

**LD 1915**, *Resolve, Directing the Department of Environmental Protection To Evaluate Emissions from Heated Aboveground Petroleum Storage Tanks* (Sen. Millett of Cumberland)

**LD 1923**, *An Act To Define as a Hazardous Substance under Maine Law Any Substance Defined under Federal Law as a Hazardous Substance, Pollutant or Contaminant* (Rep. Fay of Raymond)

## Tuesday, January 28, 2020

### **Energy, Utilities and Technology**

**1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 211**

**LD 2017**, *An Act To Promote Renewable Energy Resources by Establishing an Energy-to-Gas Pilot Project* (Rep. Riley of Jay)

**LD 2021**, *An Act To Provide Funding for Broadband Internet Infrastructure in Unserved and Underserved Areas* (Sen. Herbig of Waldo)

### **Taxation**

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

**LD 2008**, *An Act Making Technical Changes to the Maine Tax Laws* (Rep. Tipping of Orono)

**LD 2010**, *An Act To Update References*

**Continued on Page 9...**

## Portland Ovations Panel Discussion:

# "The History and Impact of Immigration in Maine"

**Saturday, January 18, 2020**

**1:00 to 2:30 p.m.**

**Maine Historical Society  
489 Congress St., Portland**

This free panel discussion will focus on these important questions: What has been the impact of immigration on Maine's land and people from the first French explorers in 1604 to the present? What are the drivers of recent immigration movements, and how does each new wave shift Maine's economy and culture? What specific challenges do Maine's environment and population pose for new arrivals; and how do we support Maine's first peoples?

To learn more or to register online, please visit <https://portlandovations.org/event/panel-discussion-history-of-immigration-maine/>. □

## Maine can meet workforce need by embracing older workers

### Maine by the numbers:

Share of people 65 and over with jobs in 2018 . . . . . 17%

Share in 2013. . . . . 19%

A recent study by the The Pew Trust found that in 36 states, the share of people 65 or over with jobs has increased in the past five years, following a national trend that economists say will continue over the next decade. More information can be found online at [www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2019/09/20/for-passion-or-for-money-more-seniors-keep-working](http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2019/09/20/for-passion-or-for-money-more-seniors-keep-working). □

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Stateline analysis



*"As a first-time attendee at the D.C. Fly-In, I was extremely impressed with the amount of access we were able to get with our Maine delegation and their staff.*

*The policy briefings from the experts at U.S. Chamber were also incredibly informative and pertinent, and I truly appreciate the work that the Maine State Chamber staff put into making this a well-coordinated and worthwhile event."*

*Judith Borelli, Director of Public Affairs,  
Texas Instruments, South Portland*

*"It is always reaffirming to meet our congressional delegation and to see first-hand their thoughtful approach to the issues impacting Maine.*

*The ability to speak with and listen to our delegation in such a small group setting is immensely beneficial, and I really appreciated the work that went into planning the trip and the time that our legislators spent with us."*

*Geoff Baur, Vice President, Finance,  
IDEXX*

**Register today to attend the Maine State Chamber's eighth annual**

## **Washington, D.C., Fly-In**

**Tuesday, April 28 through Thursday, April 30, 2020**

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce takes pride in putting together this unique opportunity for our members. As we continue to find ourselves in the middle of important issues in Washington that have a significant impact on our members, such as health care, energy, taxes, regulations, etc., the Washington, D.C., Fly-In has proven to be extremely beneficial to our member attendees as well as to our Congressional Delegates.

In order to touch on several critical federal issues that impact our member businesses, this year's trip will include a presentation by The National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to provide a Joint Policy Briefing in advance of the Capitol Hill visits. Appointments have been confirmed with each of our U.S. Congressional Delegates and their key staffers to provide you with an opportunity to share your business concerns, as well as discuss challenges and solutions.

The itinerary illustrates the value – the partnership with the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber, with individual meetings with our delegates and their staffs, access to a Joint Policy Briefing, dinner with our U.S. Congressional Delegates, and finally, an opportunity to schedule one-on-one visits to discuss policy issues specific to your industry.

Each year, we leave these meetings knowing we've been heard. And, knowing that Maine is fortunate to have congressional leaders who are caring, competent and accessible, we are certain that

we have delivered an invaluable experience for our attendees. We do hope that you will join us!

**Registration** for this event is required, and all information for that can be found at this link: <https://bit.ly/2uXtN5J>.

### **Important Member Registration Information...**

- ◆ **Event Registration:** \$750 per attendee. Attendees are responsible for all travel arrangements. *(If you are an employer with 10 employees or less, please contact Megan Diver by emailing [mdiver@mainechamber.org](mailto:mdiver@mainechamber.org) for the small/individual business rate.)*
- ◆ **Please register by Friday, April 10,** by emailing [mdiver@mainechamber.org](mailto:mdiver@mainechamber.org).
- ◆ **Hotel reservations** must be made directly to the Willard Intercontinental Hotel by Monday, April 10, by calling 1-202-628-9100. To receive the group rate, please indicate you are a member of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce's group, or via this link: <https://bit.ly/35Whxz3>. The room rate is \$479 per night plus applicable taxes; room cancellations are the responsibility of the attendee and must be made directly with the hotel.
- ◆ **Cancellations** for the event must be made by contacting Megan Diver at the Maine State Chamber by phone at (207) 623-4568, ext. 108.





## DC Fly-In... (Continued from Page 8...)

### The Washington, D.C., Fly-In 2020 Agenda:

#### Tuesday, April 28, 2020:

- ♦ Early Check-in Requested, The Willard Intercontinental, 1401 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, DC, 20004
- ♦ Late afternoon (3:30 p.m.) Joint Policy Briefing with the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, hosted at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, 1615 H St NW, Washington, DC 20062
- ♦ Reception then dinner on your own

#### Wednesday, April 29, 2020:

- ♦ Maine Member Breakfast at the Occidental Grill & Seafood at The Willard Intercontinental, 1475 Pennsylvania

## Public Hearings... (Continued from Page 7...)

Contained in the Maine Revised Statutes to the United States Internal Revenue Code of 1986 (Rep. Tipping of Orono)

#### Wednesday, January 29, 2020

##### Education and Cultural Affairs

**1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 208**

**LD 1947**, An Act To Fund Capital Improvements to Career and Technical Education Centers (Rep. Fecteau of Biddeford)

**LD 2022**, An Act To Provide Funding for Capital Improvements and Equipment

Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20004

- ♦ Meeting with Maine's Members of the United States Senate, Capitol Hill
- ♦ Lunch and Briefing TBD
- ♦ Meetings with Maine's Members of the United States Congress, Capitol Hill
- ♦ Meeting with Maine's Members of the United States Senate, Capitol Hill
- ♦ Reception / Dinner with Maine's Congressional Delegates, Sazerac

#### Thursday, April 30, 2020

- ♦ Additional Hill visits: Our staff will assist with requests for individual meetings. Please email [mdiver@mainechamber.org](mailto:mdiver@mainechamber.org) with your request, issue areas of interest, and with which of our U.S. congressional delegates' staffs or offices you would like to meet.

Any agenda revisions will be provided in advance of travel time. If you have additional questions, please contact Megan Diver by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 108, or emailing [mdiver@mainechamber.org](mailto:mdiver@mainechamber.org). □

for Career and Technical Education Centers and Regions (Sen. Herbig of Waldo)

##### Labor and Housing

**9:00 a.m.; Cross Building, Room 202**

**LD 2015**, An Act To Provide for Leave from Work for Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking (Rep. Daughtry of Brunswick)

#### Friday, January 31, 2020

##### Environment and Natural Resources

**10:00 a.m.; Cross Building, Room 216**

**LD 2033**, An Act To Ensure Proper Closure of Oil Terminal Facilities (Rep. Carney of Cape Elizabeth) □

## Digest of New Legislation

Maine Chamber staff have studied each of these recently printed bills to assess potential impact on business trends. If you have concerns regarding any bill, please communicate those concerns to a member of our governmental services staff at (207) 623-4568.

**A total of 89 business-related bills have been tracked to date since the session began on January 8, 2020!**

### BUDGET AND FINANCE

**LD 1947**, An Act To Fund Capital Improvements to Career and Technical Education Centers. (Rep. Fecteau, D-Biddeford) *Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs*. This bill authorizes the issuance and use of up to \$20,000,000 in Maine Governmental Facilities Authority securities for capital improvements to career and technical education centers and regions.

### EDUCATION

**LD 1916**, An Act To Increase High School Graduation Rates for Students Experiencing Homelessness or in Foster Care. (Sen. Libby, D-Lewiston) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs*. This bill does the following:

1. It amends the process for applying for a Department of Education diploma by requiring that the responsible school apply on behalf of a student who has experienced one or more education disruptions on request. The student's parent or guardian or a student who is over 18 years of age may still apply directly to the Department of Education, and the school must assist the student in the application process.
2. It provides that the Commissioner of Education must award a Department of Education diploma to a student who has experienced homelessness or has been in foster care who meets certain criteria and may not require that student to provide additional

**Continued on Page 10...**

## New Legislation...

(Continued from Page 9...)

- information or be interviewed.
3. It provides that a secondary school must award a diploma to a student who has experienced homelessness or foster care placement if the student meets specified criteria.
  4. It provides that the responsible school for a student whose education disruption is due to multiple transfers or homelessness or foster care placement must compile for the student partial and full credits received by the student to date, provide priority enrollment in classes in which the student has received partial credit and immediately enroll the student in classes or programs to close gaps between the compilation of credits by the student and the credits typically earned by the student's peers.
  5. It requires the responsible school to provide an adult mentor to students who experience education disruption due to homelessness or foster care

placement to facilitate transition into the school.

6. It requires that if the responsible school determines that a student who experiences education disruption will not be able to graduate by the end of the student's 4th year of secondary school, the responsible school must provide the student information regarding a Department of Education diploma and apply on behalf of the student or assist the student in making the application.

**LD 1999, An Act To Amend the Maine Education Savings Program.** (Sen. Herbig, D-Waldo) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.* This bill amends the Maine Education Savings Program by making permissive rather than mandatory the investment of fund dollars by the Finance Authority of Maine in state-based financial institutions.

**LD 2014, An Act To Amend the Laws Governing the Maine State Grant Program.** (Rep. Daughtry, D-Brunswick) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.* This bill

allows an adult learner benefiting from a grant under the Maine State Grant Program to receive up to 12 semesters' worth of grant funding.

**LD 2022, An Act To Provide Funding for Capital Improvements and Equipment for Career and Technical Education Centers and Regions.** (Sen. Herbig, D-Waldo) *Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs.* This bill authorizes the Commissioner of Education to expend and disburse funds to career and technical education centers and career and technical education regions to make capital improvements and to purchase equipment that has a useful life of at least 5 years and provides a one-time General Fund appropriation of \$4,000,000 in fiscal year 2020-21 for that purpose.

### HEALTH CARE

**LD 1975, An Act To Facilitate Dental Treatment for Children.** (Sen. Sanborn, D-Cumberland) *Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services.* This

Continued on Page 11...

# LEGISLATIVE STRICTLY SOCIAL



MAINE  
STATE  
CHAMBER  
of  
COMMERCE

Tuesday, March 31  
5:00 to 7:00 p.m.  
Senator Inn & Spa, Augusta

◆ Light hors d'oeuvres and cash bar ◆  
Please RSVP to [aarno@mainechamber.org](mailto:aarno@mainechamber.org)

## WHY EMPLOYERS LOVE OUR CAREER FAIRS

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*"Well organized by the hosts! The candidates knew who they wanted to talk to, some even had specific positions in mind."*

*"We had a great time, and success, at the career fair. We hired two individuals into our Manager In Training Program!"*

## New Legislation...

*(Continued from Page 10...)*

bill prohibits a health insurance carrier from imposing a waiting period for any dental or oral health service or treatment, except for orthodontic treatment, for an enrollee under 19 years of age.

**LD 2007, An Act To Enact the Made for Maine Health Coverage Act and Improve Health Choices in Maine.** (Speaker Gideon, D-Freeport) *Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services.* This bill:

1. Establishes the Made for Maine Health Coverage Act;
2. Establishes the Maine Health Insurance Marketplace Trust Fund;
3. Authorizes the State to enter into state-federal health coverage partnerships that support the availability of affordable health coverage;
4. Establishes a pooled market for individual health plans and small group health plans and changes reinsurance to be retrospective and applied to the

pooled market; and,

5. Creates clear choice design for cost sharing and requires coverage of certain primary care and behavioral health visits without the application of any deductible.

### **LABOR**

**LD 1965, An Act To Set a Minimum Wage for School Support Staff.** (Rep. Collings, D-Portland) *Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing.* This bill establishes a minimum wage of \$16.00 per hour for school support staff.

**LD 2015, An Act To Provide for Leave from Work for Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault or Stalking.** (Rep. Daughtry, D-Brunswick) *Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing.* This bill allows an employee to take reasonable leave from work, with or without pay, including by reducing the employee's usual number of hours per work day or workweek:

1. To seek legal or law enforcement assistance or remedies to ensure the health and safety of the employee or employee's family members includ-

ing, but not limited to, preparing for, or participating in, any civil or criminal legal proceeding related to or derived from domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking;

2. To seek treatment by a health care provider for physical or mental injuries caused by domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking or to attend to health care treatment for a victim who is the employee's family member;
3. To obtain, or assist a family member in obtaining, services from a domestic violence shelter, rape crisis center or other social services program for relief from domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking;
4. To obtain, or assist a family member in obtaining, mental health counseling related to an incident of domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking in which the employee or employee's family member was a victim; or
5. To participate in safety planning, temporarily or permanently relocate or take other actions to protect the employee or employee's family members from domestic violence, sexual assault or stalking.

### **TAXATION**

**LD 1929, Resolve Establishing a Commission to Study Fair, Equitable and Competitive Tax Policy for Maine's Working Families and Small Businesses.** (Rep. Fecteau) *Joint Standing Committee on Taxation.* The bill would do what the title suggests, that is, to establish a commission to study the impacts of the State's tax policy on working families and small businesses. The Commission would be responsible for developing recommendations designed to ensure that tax policy of the state is fair and equitable while ensuring the State remains competitive.

**LD 2010, An Act to Update References Contained in the Maine Revised Statutes to the United State Internal Revenue Code of 1986.** (Rep. Tipping, D-Orono) *Joint Standing Committee on Taxation.*

**LD 2011, An Act to Update Certain Provisions in the Income Tax and Service Provider Tax Laws.** (Rep. Tipping, D-Orono) *Joint Standing Committee on Taxation.* The bill makes changes to the income tax and service provider tax laws. □