



WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

January 26, 2026

ADVOCACY | ACCESS | AWARENESS

MEETING AGENDA

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Update from
Chamber President &
CEO

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Advocacy Team
Updates

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Upcoming Events

TAXATION

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Work Session: Tue 1/27 1:00 PM @ State House, Room 127

LD 1939 – AN ACT TO CLOSE MAINE’S TAX LOOPHOLE FOR OFFSHORE PROFIT SHIFTING

Policy Committee: Tax

Advocate: Linda Caprara

Position: Oppose

This bill would require a taxpayer, including a corporation or unitary business, that reports more than \$1,000,000,000 in gross revenues to file a combined return containing all the financial information of that taxpayer’s net profits and gross revenues worldwide. The taxpayer’s liability for Maine corporate income tax would be determined based on that combined return.

Implications: This bill would tax income that is already subject to federal tax and not economically connected to Maine, while imposing major new compliance costs on both the State and taxpayers.

VETERANS AND LEGAL AFFAIRS

LOOKING AHEAD

LD 2155 – AN ACT TO CLARIFY CERTAIN LAWS GOVERNING LICENSES FOR THE SALE OF LIQUOR BY MANUFACTURERS

Sponsor: Nicole GROHOSKI of Hancock

Policy Committee: Tax

Advocate: Linda Caprara

Position: Monitor

This bill increases to 12 the number of retail liquor licenses a person or persons that hold a majority ownership interest in a manufacturing licensee may hold no less than a majority ownership interest in. The bill also clarifies that licensees that were issued a license on or before May 23, 2025 are exempt from these restrictions on ownership interests.

Implications: The bill reverses a change in law made last year that prohibits breweries from obtaining more than three liquor licenses for other retail establishments they own, thereby impeding economic growth.



HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LOOKING AHEAD

LD 2124 - AN ACT TO SUPPORT EMERGENCY SHELTER FUNDING USING REVENUE FROM THE REAL ESTATE TRANSFER TAX

Sponsor: Drew GATTINE of Westbrook

Policy Committee Assignments: HED

Advocate Assignments: Linda Caprara

Position: ---

Under current law, 90% of the revenue from the real estate transfer tax is submitted to the State and 10% is retained by the counties, except that, for fiscal years 2025-26 and 2026-27, the percentage retained by the counties is reduced to 9.2%. This bill reduces the percentage of the real estate transfer tax revenue retained by counties by 1.8% and requires 1% of the revenue to be transferred to the Maine State Housing Authority for deposit in the shelter operating subsidy program beginning September 1, 2026; beginning August 1, 2027, 1.8% of the revenue is required to be transferred to the Maine State Housing Authority to be allocated as part of the operations share of the shelter operating subsidy program. Beginning September 1, 2026, the percentage of the real estate transfer tax retained by counties is reduced to 8.2%.



HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LOOKING AHEAD

LD 2127 – AN ACT TO INCREASE THE CAP ON BONDS ISSUED BY THE MAINE STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY TO REFLECT CURRENT HOUSING PRODUCTION NEEDS IN THE STATE

Sponsor: Glenn CURRY of Waldo

Policy Committee Assignments: Chamber; HED

Advocate Assignments: Linda Caprara

Position: ---

This bill increases from \$3,000,000,000 to \$4,000,000,000 the cap on certain mortgage purchase bonds issued by the Maine State Housing Authority.



LABOR

RECAPPING LAST WEEK

Public Hearing: Wed 1/21

LD 2110 – AN ACT TO UPDATE EMPLOYER SUBSTANCE USE TESTING POLICY REQUIREMENTS

Policy Committee: Labor

Advocate: Amanda Johnson

Position: Oppose

This bill updates and clarifies employer substance use testing requirements, including employee rights to contest non-negative results, reporting through a medical review officer, changes to rehabilitation timelines and cost responsibility, laboratory requirements, and other technical updates.

Implications: The bill improves fairness and consistency in workplace substance testing by giving employees the right to contest non-negative results and requiring reporting through a medical review officer, but it may create challenges by shifting rehabilitation costs to employees, shortening program timelines, and raising potential concerns about accuracy, impartiality, or legal liability when employers collect samples or meet lab requirements.

Gave testimony in opposition.

LABOR

RECAPPING LAST WEEK

Work Session: Wed 1/21

LD 1993 – AN ACT TO INCREASE THE ANNUAL CAP ON FUNDS ASSESSED FOR THE SAFETY EDUCATION AND TRAINING FUND

Policy Committee: Labor

Advocate: Amanda Johnson

Position: Oppose

This bill raises the limit on the total annual amount of the assessment that supports the Department of Labor's Safety Education and Training Fund from 1% to 2% of the total of the workers' compensation benefits paid by all licensed carriers and group and individual self-insured employers during the most recent calendar year for which data is available.

Implications: Increasing the cap on assessments could provide more funding for workplace safety training and education, potentially reducing injuries and improving safety outcomes for employers and employees. However, it may also lead to higher assessment costs for insurance carriers and self-insured employers, which could be passed to employers as increased premiums or administrative expenses, affecting business operating costs.

This was voted Ought to Pass in the Labor Committee during the Work Session.

LABOR

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Public Hearing: Tue 1/27 1:00 PM @ Cross Building, Room 202

LD 2018 – AN ACT TO AMEND THE REQUIREMENTS GOVERNING SELF-INSURANCE PLANS IN THE PAID FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE BENEFITS PROGRAM

Policy Committee: Labor

Advocate: Amanda Johnson

Position: Oppose

This bill clarifies that private self-insured plans under the paid family and medical leave program may not pool risk, financial resources, or administration among multiple employers. This provision also applies retroactively to April 1, 2025

Implications: This bill prohibits self-insured private plans under Maine’s Paid Family and Medical Leave program from pooling risk, finances, or administration with other employers and applies that restriction retroactively. While it offers some regulatory clarity, it significantly reduces flexibility for employers—particularly small and mid-sized ones—by eliminating a common way to manage cost, risk, and administrative burden. The retroactive application may also disrupt existing arrangements and create uncertainty or compliance challenges for employers that acted in good faith under prior interpretations.

LABOR

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Public Hearing: Tue 1/27 1:00 PM @ Cross Building, Room 202

LD 2049 - AN ACT TO CLARIFY INDEMNIFICATION WHEN SEEKING REMEDY FOR LABOR LAW VIOLATIONS

Policy Committee: Labor

Advocate: Amanda Johnson

Position: Oppose

This bill establishes joint and several liability for contractors and subcontractors in the construction industry, as well as for employment agencies and employers, for violations of certain labor laws. It also requires indemnification for wages, damages, penalties, interest, and attorney fees resulting from those violations.

Implications: This bill imposes joint and several liability on contractors for their subcontractors' labor violations and on employers for violations involving staffing agencies. While it may improve wage recovery for workers, it significantly increases legal and financial risk for contractors and employers for actions they may not directly control. The added exposure to penalties, litigation, and indemnification disputes could raise costs, discourage the use of subcontractors or staffing agencies, and disproportionately impact small businesses.

ENERGY, UTILITIES, & TECHNOLOGY

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Public Hearing: Thu 2/5 1:00 PM @ Cross Building, Room 211 LD 307 – AN ACT REGARDING ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY

Policy Committee: EET

Advocate: Ashley Luszczki

Position: TBD

This bill is a concept draft – no language currently available.

Upcoming Work Session: Tues 1/27 1:00 PM @ Cross Building, Room 211 LD 1949 – AN ACT REGARDING ENERGY FAIRNESS

Policy Committee: EET

Advocate: Ashley Luszczki

Position: Oppose

This bill expands the Commission's focus on residential affordability by limiting broadening the circumstances when disconnections can happen. It restricts what investor-owned utilities may recover in rates with penalties and refunds for violations. The bill also adds new reporting requirements for larger utilities.

Implications: By broadening the circumstances when residential disconnections occur, it could shift risk and costs to non-residential ratepayers and utilities. It requires a greater reporting burden and could limit utilities' involvement in certain activities as their ability to recover those costs would be reduced.

ENERGY, UTILITIES, & TECHNOLOGY

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Work Session: Thurs 1/29 11:00 AM @ Cross Building, Room 211

LD 2038 – AN ACT TO REQUIRE MAINE TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION UTILITY PARTICIPATION IN A REGIONAL TRANSMISSION ORGANIZATION

Policy Committee: EET

Advocate: Ashley Luszccki

Position: Oppose

This bill mandates transmission and distribution utilities to be a part of a regional transmission organization, providing an exception for consumer-owned utilities and utilities located in a certain area of the state.

Implications: Mandating participation in a FERC-approved RTO would eliminate utilities eligibility for the federal RTO participation bonus return on equity, but also save ratepayers some money.

Upcoming Work Sessions: Thurs 1/29 1:00 PM @ Cross Building, Room 211

LDLD 1966 – AN ACT TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO COMMUNITY SOLAR PROGRAMS IN THE STATE

Policy Committee: EET

Advocate: Ashley Luszccki

Position: Oppose

This bill requires transmission and distribution utilities to disclose and itemize administrative charges billed to customers, making refunds available if charges are improper. It requires utilities to offer consolidated billing with net crediting. It also requires clearer explanations of public policy charges on customer bills.

Implications: The bill would improve billing transparency for customers while adding compliance costs for utilities.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Public Hearing: Wed 2/4 1:00 PM @ Cross Building, Room 216

LD 2036 – AN ACT TO CLARIFY THE APPROVAL PROCESS FOR AND THE OPERATION OF THE COMMINGLING PROGRAM FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF BEVERAGE CONTAINERS

Policy Committee: EET

Advocate: Ashley Luszczki

Position: TBD

This bill modifies how Maine's beverage container redemption commingling program is structured and reviewed. It requires that the cooperative's operational plan transition container sorting from brand-based to material-based sorting. It would make changes retroactive to January 1, 2025.

Implications: It could require operational changes and capital investment by beverage distributors, cooperatives, and recycling partners.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Work Session: Wed 1/28 10:30 AM @ Cross Building, Room 216

LD 1870 – AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A CLIMATE SUPERFUND COST RECOVERY PROGRAM TO IMPOSE PENALTIES ON CLIMATE POLLUTERS

Policy Committee: EET

Advocate: Ashley Luszczki

Position: Oppose

Creates a Climate Superfund Cost Recovery Program, retroactively assessing a fee on fossil fuel companies from 1995 – 2024. Payments will be used to fund climate adaptation and resiliency projects.

Implications: It could add costs for the state, consumers, and businesses. There is also a very strong chance that it would be litigated. By singling out a single sector of the economy who has provided a product consumer and government have deemed necessary, it would set a very bad policy precedent.

Upcoming Work Session: Wed 1/28 10:30 AM @ Cross Building, Room 216

LD 2037 – AN ACT TO UPDATE THE REGIONAL GREENHOUSE GAS INITIATIVE ALLOWANCES

Advocates: Patrick Woodcock, Ashley Luszczki

Policy Committee: EET

Position: Support

The bill updates Maine's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) by adjusting the state's annual carbon dioxide emissions allowance budgets for future years beginning in 2027 and beyond

Implications: The updated allowance limits would influence how many carbon allowances Maine can sell or use, potentially impacting emissions compliance costs and revenue for state programs.

ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Work Session: Wed 1/28 10:30 AM @ Cross Building, Room 216

LD 2063 – AN ACT TO CLARIFY ACTIVITIES ALLOWED UNDER THE NATURAL RESOURCES PROTECTION ACT

Policy Committee: EET

Advocate Assignments: Ashley Luszczki

Position: Monitor

The bill makes changes to Maine Natural Resources Protection Act. In particular, clarifying when emergency activity to alleviate a threat requires a permit. It also adds great ponds and habitat for state endangered, and state threatened species that is significant wildlife habitat, should be added to the list of areas under the department's compensation program.

Implications: The bill would clarify emergency flood response authority, and strengthen long-term environmental compensation and enforcement mechanisms.

HOUSING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Work Session: Thurs 1/29 1:00 PM @ Cross Building, Room 206

LD 1908 – AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE COOPERATION OF ORIGINAL MANUFACTURERS OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES TO FACILITATE THE REPAIR OF THOSE DEVICES BY DEVICE OWNERS AND INDEPENDENT REPAIR PROVIDERS

Policy Committee: EET

Advocate: Ashley Luszczki

Position: Oppose

The bill establishes a right-to-repair requirement, requiring manufacturers of digital electronic equipment sold or used in Maine to provide independent repair providers and owners with access to necessary repair documentation, parts, and tools on “fair and reasonable” terms. Enforcement of this law would be through a private right of action.

Implications: This would provide owners with greater choice in how their products are repaired. It could also require manufacturers to provide sensitive informational and open businesses to greater litigation.

HOUSING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

RECAPPING LAST WEEK

Work Session: Tues 1/20

LD 1926 – AN ACT TO REQUIRE INCREASED HOUSING DENSITY OR LOWER MINIMUM LOT SIZES FOR WORKFORCE HOUSING

Policy Committee: EET

Advocate: Patrick Woodcock

Position: Support

The bill seeks to expand dense housing by requiring municipalities to allow larger dense housing if the project is intended for households with income less than 220 percent of the median income.

Implications: The bill is a key priority of of the Maine Real Estate and Development Association to support more projects for middle-income households.



HOUSING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LOOKING AHEAD

Upcoming Work Session: Tues 1/27 1:00 PM @ Cross Building, Room 206
LD 1921 AN ACT TO CREATE A STATEWIDE HOUSING RESOLUTION BOARD

Policy Committee: EET

Advocate: Patrick Woodcock

Position: Support

The bill seeks to create a state process to resolve municipal disputes for housing development and is modeled after legislation that New Hampshire has enacted within the last four years.

Implications: The bill could provide a method for housing developers to overturn rejections of housing projects that were consistent with zoning rules, but are rejected due to local objections (arbitrary and capricious).

Action: The Committee voted Ought Not to Pass 10-1. MEREDA and the Chamber will be encouraging the Committee to reconsider the vote.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Next Weekly Legislative Update:
Monday, February 2, 2026




Weekly
Legislative Update

Join us weekly during the legislative session from 8:30 - 9 a.m. on the first day of the week



**STRENGTHENING
RURAL HEALTHCARE
IN MAINE**

A VIRTUAL EVENT
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 2026
9:00 - 10:00 AM



MAINE
STATE
CHAMBER
COMMERCE

**2026
BUSINESS
DAY AT THE
STATE HOUSE**

HALL OF FLAGS, MAINE STATE HOUSE
TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2026
8:30 AM - 12 NOON

MAINE

S T A T E

CHAMBER
of

COMMERCE