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# WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

February 2, 2026

ADVOCACY | ACCESS | AWARENESS

# MEETING AGENDA

01

Update from  
Chamber President &  
CEO

02

Advocacy Team  
Updates

03

Upcoming Events

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# GOVERNOR'S STATE OF THE STATE

## Affordability Agenda Key Initiatives

01

### RELIEF CHECKS

\$300/\$600 checks sent to single/joint filing households with less than \$112k/\$150k annual income. Funding would come from budget stabilization fund at a cost of \$218.5 million.

02

### HOUSING PRODUCTION

\$55 million in housing production in various housing programs for new affordable/medium-income households.

03

### FREE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Makes Permanent Free Community College.

04

### STATE EDUCATION FUNDING

Maintains 55 percent funding by providing \$46 million in K-12 education.

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# GOVERNOR'S STATE OF THE STATE

Housing Key Initiatives (\$55 million proposed)

01

## **RURAL AFFORDABLE RENTAL PROGRAM**

\$15 million for the successful Rural Affordable Rental Program to create 83 new apartments in rural areas across the state.

02

## **AFFORDABLE HOMEOWNERSHIP PROGRAM**

\$7.5 million for the Affordable Homeownership Program, which helps lower the costs to developers building single-family subdivisions, expected to create 88 homes.

03

## **MAINEHOUSING MIDDLE INCOME PILOT PROGRAM**

\$10 million for a new pilot program at MaineHousing to create 100 new homes to be rented or owned by middle-income Maine people.

04

## **MAINEHOUSING MOBILE HOME PARK PILOT PROGRAM**

\$7.5 million for a new pilot program at MaineHousing to create 429 affordable homes by helping existing mobile home parks finance expansion and infill.

05

## **FEDERAL HOUSING TAX CREDITS**

\$15 million to leverage federal housing tax credits, which will create 125 new rental apartments

ADVOCATE: LINDA CAPRARA



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# TAXATION

LOOKING AHEAD

**Upcoming Work Session: Tue 2/10 1:00 PM @ State House, Room 127**

**LD 2178 - AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE INDEPENDENT OFFICE OF TAX APPEALS AND MAKE OTHER CHANGES TO THE LAWS GOVERNING THE TAX APPEALS PROCESS**

Policy Committee: Tax

Advocate: Linda Caprara

**Position: Not yet determined**

The bill would make a number of changes to the tax dispute resolution and administrative appeals process.

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# JUDICIARY

LOOKING AHEAD

**Upcoming Work Session: Fri 2/6 10:00 AM @ State House, Room 438**

**LD 127 - AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PROGRAMS BY REAFFIRMING THE LEGISLATURE'S ACCESS TO CONFIDENTIAL RECORDS**

Policy Committee: Judiciary

Advocate: Linda Caprara

**Position: Oppose**

The bill would provide the Government Oversight Committee with the ability to receive information and records that are privileged and confidential that are currently only available to the Office of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability (OPEGA) in the course of their authorized investigations.

**Implications: This bill would allow the Government Oversight Committee unfettered access to all sorts of confidential and proprietary business information.**

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# HOUSING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

LOOKING AHEAD

**Upcoming Public Hearing: Tue 2/10 1:00 PM @ Cross Building, Room 206**

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

Policy Committee: HED

Advocate: 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%.

ADVOCATE: AMANDA JOHNSON



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# HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

RECAPPING LAST WEEK

## **Work Session: Wed 1/28**

### **LD 519 – AN ACT TO REMOVE THE REQUIREMENT THAT INDIVIDUAL AND SMALL GROUP HEALTH PLANS BE OFFERED THROUGH A POOLED MARKET AND TO ELIMINATE THE PROVISION OF LAW ESTABLISHING A POOLED MARKET FOR THOSE PLAN**

Policy Committee: HCIFS

Advocate: Amanda Johnson

**Position: Oppose**

This bill ends Maine's pooled market for individual and small group health insurance, so insurers no longer have to offer these plans through a shared pool. It also removes the related requirement for the Maine Guaranteed Access Reinsurance Association to provide a special reinsurance program for all plans in a pooled market year. Essentially, it repeals the rules that created and managed the pooled market and its reinsurance system

**Implications: While the proposed MGARA net loss assessment may help stabilize the individual and small group health insurance markets, it would increase costs for Maine businesses, particularly small and large employers who do not directly benefit from the program. This added financial burden could further strain business margins and potentially be passed on to consumers, affecting Maine's overall business climate.**

**Was voted ought to pass in committee.**

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# HEALTH COVERAGE, INSURANCE AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

LOOKING AHEAD

## **LD 2056 – AN ACT TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL FINANCING OPTIONS TO CONSUMERS IN THE STATE**

Sponsor: Glenn CURRY of Waldo

Policy Committee: HCIFS

Advocate: Amanda Johnson

**Position: Support**

This bill clarifies Maine’s consumer credit law by reaffirming the general requirement for substantially equal loan payments while specifying limited exceptions. It allows unequal payments for down payments, significantly varied payment intervals, or simple interest loans where no payment exceeds another by more than 50%, providing added flexibility without undermining consumer protections.

**Implications: This bill provides greater flexibility in structuring simple-interest loan payments, allowing modest variation while still placing clear limits on how much payments can differ. It can support more practical repayment options for borrowers and lenders, while maintaining consumer protections by capping payment differences at 50%.**



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# JUDICIARY

LOOKING AHEAD

**Upcoming Work Session: Wed 2/4 1:00 PM @ State House, Room 438**

**LD 1911 – AN ACT TO AUTOMATICALLY SEAL CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD INFORMATION FOR CERTAIN CRIMES**

Policy Committee: LHHI

Advocate: Amanda Johnson

**Position: Oppose as originally written**

This bill would create a statewide system to automatically seal certain criminal records after setting waiting periods, including eligible non-convictions and older, qualifying convictions, without requiring court petitions.

**Implications: This bill would automatically seal certain non-convictions and older, qualifying criminal records, which could improve access to jobs and housing for rehabilitated individuals and streamline the court process. However, it would also limit employers' access to criminal history information, raise concerns about workplace safety, hiring transparency, and added administrative complexity for state agencies.**

**Will have a third work session held (to be determined).**

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# LABOR

RECAPPING LAST WEEK

## **Public Hearing: Tue 1/27**

### **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.

**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 provides regulatory clarity, it reduces flexibility for employers, especially small and mid-sized businesses by eliminating a key tool for managing costs and administrative burden and may disrupt existing arrangements made in good faith.**

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# LABOR

LOOKING AHEAD

**Upcoming Public Hearing: Tue 2/10 1:00 PM @ Cross Building, Room 202**

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

Policy Committee: LHHI

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.**

ADVOCATE: ASHLEY LUSZCZKI



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# 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 legislation requires the Department of Energy Resources to convene a Maine Artificial Intelligence Data Center Coordination Council to provide strategic input, facilitate coordinated state planning considerations and evaluate policy tools to address AI data center benefits and risks.

**Implications: The Council does not include a data center developer or a representative from the business community, besides the Commissioner of DECD, which could skew findings.**

## **Upcoming Work Session: Tues 2/3 1:00 PM @ Cross Building, Room 211 LD 1949 – AN ACT REGARDING ENERGY FAIRNESS**

Policy Committee: EET

Advocate: Ashley Luszczki

**Position: Oppose**

**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.**

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# ENERGY, UTILITIES, & TECHNOLOGY

LOOKING AHEAD

**Upcoming Work Session: Thurs 2/5 2:00 PM @ Cross Building, Room 211**

## **LD 838 – AN ACT TO EXPLORE PUBLIC FINANCING AND OWNERSHIP OF ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION INFRASTRUCTURE**

Policy Committee: EET

Advocate: Ashley Luszczki

**Position: Monitor**

**Implications: It could shift strategic transmission planning, siting, and procurements away from utilities, the PUC, and DOER toward a new entity. It could increase labor costs, limiting bidding pool.**

## **LD 2113 – AN ACT TO ALIGN LONG-RANGE GRID STRATEGY WITH THE STATE ENERGY PLAN AND STRENGTHEN INTEGRATED GRID PLANNING**

Policy Committee Assignments: Chamber; EET

Advocate: Ashley Luszczki

**Position: Monitor**

## **LD 2153 – AN ACT TO TRANSFER THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNOR'S ENERGY OFFICE TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES**

Policy Committee Assignments: Chamber; EET

Advocate: Ashley Luszczki

**Position: Monitor**

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# ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

LOOKING AHEAD

**Upcoming Public Hearing: Wed 2/4 1:00 PM @ Cross Building, Room 2116**

**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: Support**

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. Ultimately, could save costs and resources.**



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# ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES

LOOKING AHEAD

## **LD 2141 – AN ACT TO DIRECT A PORTION OF UNCLAIMED BEVERAGE CONTAINER DEPOSITS TO THE LAKE WATER QUALITY RESTORATION AND PROTECTION FUND, THE MAINE WORKING FARMLAND ACCESS AND PROTECTION PROGRAM AND PUBLIC DEFENDER OFFICE STAFFING**

Policy Committee: EET

Advocate: Ashley Luszczki

**Position: Oppose**

This bill directs a portion of unclaimed beverage container deposits toward investment in the Lake Water Quality Restoration and Protection Fund, the Maine Working Farmland Access and Protection Program, and the Maine Commission on Public Defense Services to support regional public defender office.

**Implications: Unclaimed deposits have been used by commingling groups to partially offset the significant costs associated with collecting containers and paying handling fees. This would take about half those funds and use them for other priorities, unrelated to bottle recycling.**



# UPCOMING EVENTS

Next Weekly Legislative Update:  
**Monday, February 9, 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

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S T A T E

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CHAMBER

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COMMERCE