

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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LAWS
OF THE
STATE OF MAINE

AS PASSED BY THE

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION
December 4, 2024 to March 21, 2025

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION
March 25, 2025 to June 25, 2025

THE GENERAL EFFECTIVE DATE FOR
FIRST REGULAR SESSION
NONEMERGENCY LAWS IS
JUNE 20, 2025

THE GENERAL EFFECTIVE DATE FOR
FIRST SPECIAL SESSION
NONEMERGENCY LAWS IS
SEPTEMBER 24, 2025

PUBLISHED BY THE REVISOR OF STATUTES
IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE MAINE REVISED STATUTES ANNOTATED,
TITLE 3, SECTION 163-A, SUBSECTION 4.

Augusta, Maine
2025

Sec. D-80. 36 MRSA §1543, as amended by PL 1977, c. 679, §6, is further amended to read:

§1543. Each acreage interest forfeited if tax unpaid

Each fractional part, or interest represented by acreage, in all ~~such~~ public reserved lots, upon which the state taxes and interest are not paid by the 30th day of March of the year following the assessment ~~shall be~~ are forfeited to the State, and whenever such taxes are assessed on a biennial basis, such forfeiture ~~shall occur~~ occurs on the 30th day of March following the 2nd year of the biennium. ~~Any An~~ owner may redeem ~~his that~~ owner's interest in such public reserved lots by tendering to the State Tax Assessor, within one year after the date of the forfeiture, ~~his that~~ owner's proportional part of all the sums due on such lots, and \$1 for a release.

Sec. D-81. 36 MRSA §1545, as amended by PL 1995, c. 502, Pt. E, §30; PL 2011, c. 657, Pt. W, §7; and PL 2013, c. 405, Pt. A, §24, is further amended to read:

§1545. Timber and grass acreage forfeited held for benefit of towns

All timber and grass acreage forfeited under section 1544 ~~shall~~ must be held in trust by the State for the benefit of the people of Maine and ~~shall~~ must be held by the Director of the Bureau of Parks and Lands subject to the same powers and responsibilities as apply to other lands in ~~his~~ the director's custody.

Sec. D-82. 36 MRSA §1604, sub-§3, as enacted by PL 1985, c. 459, Pt. C, §14, is amended to read:

3. Contracts. Each county or agency ~~which that~~ contracts with another entity to provide services funded under this chapter shall enter into a written contract with the providing agency. A copy of each contract ~~shall~~ must be maintained in the office of the county or agency entering into the contract. A copy of each contract ~~shall~~ must be provided to the fiscal administrator of the unorganized territory, who shall maintain copies in ~~his that~~ fiscal administrator's office.

Sec. D-83. 36 MRSA §1605, sub-§1, as amended by PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §§81 and 106 and PL 1989, c. 6; c. 9, §2; and c. 104, Pt. C, §§8 and 10, is further amended to read:

1. Fund established. The Legislature hereby creates the Unorganized Territory Education and Services Fund. The State Tax Assessor shall deposit in the fund all Unorganized Territory Educational and Services Tax money and county tax money, assessed pursuant to Title 30-A, section 706, ~~which he that the assessor~~ collects.

See title page for effective date.

**CHAPTER 114
H.P. 368 - L.D. 600**

An Act to Initiate Recounts in Tied Elections

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 21-A MRSA §732, first ¶, as enacted by PL 1985, c. 161, §6, is amended to read:

When there is an apparent tie vote, the Secretary of State shall automatically initiate a recount. If a recount confirms a tie vote, the following provisions apply.

Sec. 2. 21-A MRSA §737-A, 3rd ¶, as amended by PL 2019, c. 320, §16, is further amended to read:

~~A Any~~ candidate ~~who is the apparent loser and~~ other than the apparent winner who desires a recount must file with the Secretary of State a written request for a recount within 5 business days after the election, except that in an election determined by ranked-choice voting, only a candidate who received one of the top 3 rankings at the end of the penultimate round of ranked-choice counting may request a recount. The recount is held under the supervision of the Secretary of State, who shall allow the candidate's representatives or counsel to recount the ballots. The candidate may not act as a counter of ballots.

Sec. 3. 30-A MRSA §2528, sub-§10, as amended by PL 2021, c. 564, §1, is further amended to read:

10. Election by plurality vote; tie vote. Unless otherwise provided for at a municipal meeting held at least 180 days before the election, the provisions of this subsection apply. Election must be by plurality vote. In the case of a tie vote, the municipal clerk shall automatically initiate a recount. If a recount confirms a tie vote, the meeting must be adjourned to a day certain, when ballots are again cast for the candidates tied for the office in question, unless all but one tied candidate withdraw from a subsequent election by delivering written notice of withdrawal signed by the candidate and notarized to the municipal offices within the 7-day period following the election. After the 7-day period has expired, the municipal officers shall call a run-off election between the remaining candidates by posting a warrant in the manner required for calling a town meeting. If only one candidate remains, that candidate is declared the winner and sworn into office.

If the meeting is adjourned sine die before a tie vote is resolved or the tie vote is discovered after the meeting adjourns sine die and more than one candidate remains,

a new meeting must be called to conduct a run-off election by the method described in this subsection.

See title page for effective date.

CHAPTER 115

H.P. 702 - L.D. 1080

An Act Prohibiting Public Utilities from Requiring Deposits Based Solely on a Residential Customer's Income

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 35-A MRSA §705, sub-§1, as enacted by PL 1987, c. 141, Pt. A, §6, is amended to read:

1. Residential customers; applicants. ~~No~~ A public utility may not require any a deposit of any a residential customer without proof that the customer is likely to be a credit risk or to damage the property of the utility. That proof ~~shall~~ must be furnished to the customer upon request. Absence of previous experience with the utility ~~shall~~ may not be considered proof that the customer is a credit risk or threatens to damage utility property. A utility may not require a deposit from an applicant for residential service based solely on the applicant's income. For purposes of this subsection, "applicant" means a person that applies for public utility service and has not been a customer of the utility within 30 calendar days prior to the person's application for utility service. The commission shall adopt rules to carry out the purposes of this subsection. Rules adopted pursuant to this subsection are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

Sec. 2. Public Utilities Commission to adopt rules. Within 30 days of the effective date of this Act, the Public Utilities Commission shall initiate rulemaking to implement the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35-A, section 705, subsection 1, as amended by this Act.

See title page for effective date.

CHAPTER 116

H.P. 104 - L.D. 171

An Act to Enhance Protections Regarding Invasive Aquatic Plant and Animal Infestations in Inland Waters of the State

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 38 MRSA §1862, sub-§1, as enacted by PL 2001, c. 434, Pt. A, §7, is amended to read:

1. Program. The commissioner and the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife jointly shall implement a program to inspect watercraft, watercraft trailers and outboard motors at or near the border of the State and at boat launching sites for the presence of invasive aquatic plants; to monitor inland waters of the State known to be infested with invasive aquatic plants; and to provide educational materials to the public and to watercraft owners regarding invasive aquatic plants and surface use restrictions on inland waters of the State pursuant to section 1864.

Sec. 2. 38 MRSA §1862, sub-§4, as enacted by PL 2001, c. 434, Pt. A, §7, is amended by amending the first blocked paragraph to read:

The program in 2002 and subsequent years must be at a level of effort determined by the commissioner and the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife in consultation with the Interagency Task Force on Invasive Aquatic ~~Plant~~ Plants and Nuisance Species, as established in section 1871. The program must include a review of watercraft inspection protocols and surface use restrictions on inland waters of the State known to be infested with invasive aquatic plants pursuant to section 1864.

Sec. 3. 38 MRSA §1862, sub-§5 is enacted to read:

5. Report. The commissioner and the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife shall submit a report detailing program activities to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over inland fisheries and wildlife matters by January 15th annually. The committee may report out a bill based on the report to any regular or special session of the Legislature.

Sec. 4. 38 MRSA §1864, as amended by PL 2003, c. 551, §20 and c. 627, §8, is further amended to read:

§1864. Emergency authority to regulate surface use

The commissioner and the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife may jointly issue an emergency order to restrict access to or restrict or prohibit the use of any watercraft on all or a portion of a water body that has a confirmed infestation of an invasive aquatic plant or animal. The order must be for a specific period of time and may be issued only when the use of watercraft on that water body threatens to worsen or spread the infestation. The order may require that watercraft ~~on~~ using waters affected by the order be taken out of or launched on the water only at locations identified in the order. The order may require inspections and cleaning of watercraft, watercraft trailers and equipment upon removal at sites that have been identified in the order. Inspections must be conducted by designated ~~state~~ state-trained boat inspectors. For purposes of this section, "designated state boat inspector" means a person ~~em~~