

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

CHAPTER 43
H.P. 753 - L.D. 1148

Resolve, Directing the Secretary of State to Study Providing Access to Absentee Ballots for Municipal Elections to Uniformed Service Voters or Overseas Voters in the Same Manner as Absentee Ballots for Statewide Elections

Sec. 1. Department of Secretary of State to study providing access to absentee ballots for municipal elections to uniformed service voters or overseas voters in same manner as absentee ballots for statewide elections. Resolved: That the Department of the Secretary of State shall study the feasibility of and methods for providing digital access to and receipt of local absentee ballots for uniformed service voters or overseas voters from a municipality holding an election on the same date as a statewide election. In conducting this study, the Department of the Secretary of State may consult with members of an association representing town and city clerks.

Sec. 2. Department of Secretary of State to update information provided to uniformed service voters or overseas voters regarding access to and return of local absentee ballots. Resolved: That the Department of the Secretary of State shall update its publicly accessible website or the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act absentee ballot retrieval service portal, as applicable, to include clearly and conspicuously that local absentee ballots must be obtained from the uniformed service voter's or overseas voter's municipality of residence and that the process for applying for, receiving and returning absentee ballots through the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act absentee ballot retrieval service portal applies only to statewide and federal elections. The Secretary of State shall make easily accessible the contact information for each municipality in the State.

Sec. 3. Report. Resolved: That, no later than December 3, 2025, the Secretary of State shall submit a report based upon the study in section 1, including an update on the information required under section 2, along with any recommended legislation, to the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs, which may report out legislation related to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

See title page for effective date.

CHAPTER 44
H.P. 857 - L.D. 1322

Resolve, to Establish a Pilot Program to Enhance Youth Hunting Participation

Sec. 1. Youth participation in hunting pilot program. Resolved: That the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, referred to in this resolve as "the department," in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Community Development, Office of Tourism, shall establish through rulemaking a 2-year pilot program to run for calendar years 2026 and 2027 to increase youth participation in hunting. The program must include expanded youth hunting seasons and outreach initiatives.

Sec. 2. Program components. Resolved: That the 2-year pilot program under section 1 consists of the following components.

1. The department shall schedule the youth spring wild turkey hunting day pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 12, section 11701, subsection 3 during a period with increased availability for youth hunters, such as a long weekend, or the department may establish a 2-day season on a Friday and Saturday.

2. The department shall establish a 2-day youth bear hunting season on a Friday and Saturday during a time when youth are more likely to be able to participate, such as late summer or early fall.

3. The department shall establish a day for youth hunting with dogs prior to the start of the regular season for hunting with dogs pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 12, section 11251, subsection 1.

4. The pilot program must include a robust public relations and social media campaign aimed at increasing awareness of youth hunting opportunities and promoting responsible and safe hunting practices.

5. The pilot program must include collaboration with community organizations, schools and outdoor retailers to host informational and educational events.

6. The department must invite the participation of hunting organizations, local communities and conservation groups to ensure the pilot program meets community and environmental standards.

Sec. 3. Rules. Resolved: That the department, in collaboration with the Department of Economic and Community Development, Office of Tourism, shall adopt rules to implement the 2-year pilot program under section 1, including but not limited to setting specific dates for the pilot program and establishing participation guidelines and reporting requirements. Rules adopted pursuant to this section are routine technical rules as defined in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

Sec. 4. Report. Resolved: That the department shall report by January 6, 2027 and by January 5, 2028 on the implementation of the 2-year pilot program under section 1 to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over inland fisheries and wildlife matters. The report must include:

1. Participation data and demographic trends;
2. Feedback from participants and stakeholders;
3. The pilot program's impact on youth engagement and conservation awareness; and
4. Recommendations for pilot program continuation, modification or termination.

Sec. 5. Legislation. Resolved: That in the report submitted pursuant to section 4 in 2028, the department may include suggested legislation based on department findings during the 2-year pilot program under section 1. The joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over inland fisheries and wildlife matters may submit legislation based on the report to the Second Regular Session of the 133rd Legislature.

See title page for effective date.

CHAPTER 45

S.P. 634 - L.D. 1550

Resolve, Directing the Department of Health and Human Services to Amend Its Rules to Protect Water Quality by Reducing Nutrient Pollution from Septic Systems

Sec. 1. Definitions. Resolved: That, as used in this resolve, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

1. "Department" means the Department of Health and Human Services.
2. "Disposal field" means an individual subsurface wastewater disposal system component consisting of a closed excavation made within soil or fill material to contain disposal field stone and distribution pipes or approved proprietary devices for the disposal of septic tank effluent. The excavation is typically in the form of trenches or beds with either stone or proprietary devices included in the design.
3. "Horizon" means a layer within a soil profile differing from the soil above or below the layer in one or more soil morphological characteristics. The characteristics of the layer include the color, texture, rock-fragment content and consistency of each parent soil material.

4. "Proprietary disposal device" means a device used in disposal fields as an alternative to a bedding of stone and one or more distribution pipes.

5. "Septic tank effluent" means primary treated wastewater discharged through the outlet of a septic tank or an approved sand, peat or similar filter.

6. "Short circuiting" means a process by which nutrients from subsurface wastewater disposal systems enter groundwater or surface waters relatively untreated due to a lack of cation exchange capacity and biologic activity in the soil as a result of very coarse textured horizons or bedrock fractures.

Sec. 2. Amendment of subsurface wastewater disposal rule. Resolved: That the department shall amend its rule Chapter 241 in the section that governs the requirements for disposal field design for subsurface wastewater disposal systems. The amendments must include the following:

1. Amending the design standards for disposal fields to add a requirement to address short circuiting by reducing nutrient loading from septic tank effluent through natural processes;
2. Applying the amended design standards under subsection 1 only to soil profiles that pose a high risk of short circuiting due to the presence of sand or gravel layers in lower horizons or bedrock fractures; and
3. Providing that an area of land suitable for the installation of a disposal field may not be rendered unsuitable due to any changes in the rules adopted pursuant to this resolve.

Sec. 3. Administration, enforcement and rulemaking. Resolved: That the department shall administer and enforce this resolve and shall adopt rules as necessary to implement, administer and enforce this resolve. The department shall solicit input from interested parties in the development of any draft rules to implement this resolve and shall hold a public hearing on the draft rules in accordance with the process described in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, section 8052.

Sec. 4. Resources. Resolved: That the department shall complete the amendment of the subsurface wastewater disposal rule under section 2 within existing resources and may seek staffing and financial support from other state agencies and private entities to accomplish the required amendment.

See title page for effective date.