

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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SEN. BETH EDMONDS
CHAIR

REP. GLENN A. CUMMINGS
VICE-CHAIR

123RD MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

SEN. ELIZABETH H. MITCHELL
SEN. CAROL WESTON
SEN. JOHN L. MARTIN
SEN. RICHARD W. ROSEN
REP. HANNAH M. PINGREE
REP. JOSHUA A. TARDY
REP. SEAN FAIRCLOTH
REP. ROBERT H. CROSTHWAITE

MEETING SUMMARY
MARCH 2, 2006
APPROVED APRIL 24, 2006*

CALL TO ORDER

The Chair, Speaker Richardson, called the Legislative Council meeting to order at 1:45 p.m. in the Legislative Council Chamber.

ROLL CALL

Senators:	President Edmonds, Sen. Brennan, Sen. Davis, Sen. Gagnon, Sen. Weston
Representatives:	Speaker Richardson, Rep. Cummings, Rep. Bowles, Rep. Duplessie, Rep. Tardy
Legislative Officers:	Joy O'Brien, Secretary of the Senate Millicent MacFarland, Clerk of the House Michael Cote, Assistant Clerk of the House David Boulter, Executive Director, Legislative Council Grant Pennoyer, Director, Office of Fiscal and Program Review Patrick Norton, Director, Office of Policy and Legal Analysis Margaret Matheson, Revisor of Statutes Lynn Randall, State Law Librarian Paul Mayotte, Director, Legislative Information Services

SUMMARY OF THE FEBRUARY 16, 2006 COUNCIL MEETING

Motion: That the Meeting Summary of February 16, 2006 be accepted and placed on file.
(Motion by Rep. Cummings, second by President Edmonds, unanimous).

REPORTS FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND STAFF OFFICE DIRECTORS

- **Executive Director's Report**

No report.

- **Fiscal Report**

Grant Pennoyer, Director, Office of Fiscal and Program Review, reported the following:

General Fund Revenue Revised Downward by \$14.3 million

On February 23, 2006, the Revenue Forecasting Committee revised revenue projections downward by \$14.3 million, which represents a 9% reversal of the earlier \$164.4 million upward revision in December. The revised projected ending balance for the biennium is \$113.1 million.

The fiscal estimate for the Governor's current supplemental budget proposals is \$125.3 million, which would result in a \$12.2 budget shortfall. The Governor's office intends to submit a change package to the budget proposal that should address this shortfall.

The committee also revised the 2008-2009 revenue forecast for the biennium downward by \$53 million, which will increase the structural gap.

Highway Fund

The Highway Fund was revised downward by \$5.1 million, resulting in a projected year end balance of \$5 million. The Governor's supplemental budget proposals would result in a fund shortfall. The Governor intends to submit a change package that would result in a balanced budget.

Fund for a Healthy Maine

The committee also revised the Fund for a Healthy Maine downward by \$1.1 million, reflecting a projected change in Racino revenue. This would result in a shortfall of \$19.1 million. The Governor's supplemental budget addressed \$18.1 million so budget changes would be necessary to address the \$1 million shortfall.

- **Office of Information Services' Report**

Bill Drafting System

The Revisor's Office is testing MELD's post-session functions. Noncompliant functions identified in testing will be added to the warranty items list for HP's corrective action.

HP will install a software update on March 6, 2006 and Mr. Mayotte's office will be monitoring HP's performance in correcting the warranty items.

Remote Email Access

Web access to Outlook email accounts is now available for Legislators and staff use. It is a secure process that enables authorized users to access their legislative email from offsite locations through the Internet.

REPORTS FROM COUNCIL COMMITTEES

• State House Facilities Committee

Senator Gagnon, Chair, State House Facilities Committee reported on the committee's meeting on February 16, 2006.

The facilities committee discussed issues relating to installation of video broadcast cameras in the Senate chamber. Senate Leadership would like video broadcast capability in the chamber and asked the facilities committee to assist in developing a plan that integrates the video with existing infrastructure.

The Committee discussed the matter at length and all members agreed that:

1. policy decisions regarding whether to install video cameras in the chambers, and when and under what conditions to broadcast, are decisions that are within the exclusive purview of the respective chamber leaders; and
2. consistent with how State House renovations have been handled, infrastructure issues related to common systems architecture, equipment compatibility, wiring, competitive pricing installation and other issues requiring coordination with other systems and operations are properly within the oversight of the Legislative Council and its facilities committee.

The Senate President will work with her staff and the Secretary of the Senate to decide policy and protocol issues relating to video broadcasting. The facilities committee asked nonpartisan staff offices, notably the Legislative Information Services office, to investigate and develop a plan to smoothly and cost-effectively integrate video broadcasting into existing legislative systems, for installation later this year.

• Personnel Committee

Rep. Cummings, Chair, Personnel Committee, reported that the committee met prior to the Council meeting and unanimously approved a request for temporary disability income benefits, consistent with the Personnel Policies and Guidelines for legislative employees for a member of the Clerk's Office staff. No action by the Council is needed.

The committee also discussed issues relating to staffing of ongoing study commissions, and advisory councils, and several other operational issues in staff offices. The committee staff to develop several recommendations for review.

The committee has requested Executive Director Boulter to report on the recommendations at the next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

Item #1: Council actions taken by ballot

A copy of a list of actions taken by ballot by the Legislative Council since its February 16, 2006 meeting is attached.

NEW BUSINESS

Item #1: Consideration of After Deadline Bill Requests

Twelve after deadline bill requests were considered by the Legislative Council. The Council's actions on these requests are included on the attached list.

Item #2: Submission of Study Reports

- Study Commission Regarding Liveable Wages
- Task Force to Study Maine's Homeland Security Needs

Motion: That the above Study Reports be accepted and placed on file. (No motion or second was made; approved unanimously 10-0).

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND REMARKS

None

ADJOURNMENT

The Legislative Council meeting was adjourned at 2:10 p.m. (Motion by President Edmonds, second by Sen. Davis, unanimous).