

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

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No. 2252

S.P. 864 In Senate, February 11, 1988 Approved for Introduction by a Majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 26.

Reference to the Committee on State and Local Government suggested and ordered printed.

JOY J. O'BRIEN, Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator CLARK of Cumberland. Cosponsored by Senator PERKINS of Hancock, Representative PRIEST of Brunswick, Representative TELOW of Lewiston.

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-EIGHT

AN ACT to Correct Inconsistencies in the Publication of Legal Notices.

4 Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as 5 follows:

Sec. 1. 1 MRSA §601, as amended by PL 1967, c. 7 428, §1, is further amended to read:

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1 §601. Publication of legal notices and advertising

2 To be qualified as a medium for the publication of 3 notices, legal advertising and other matter legal 4 required by law to be published in a newspaper, a 5 newspaper, unless otherwise ordered by the court in 6 the proceedings, must be published and printed in 7 whole or in part in this State or, where the law so 8 requires, in whole or in part in the county where the 9 notice is required to be published; must be printed 10 in the English language; and must be entered as second 11 class postal matter in the United States mails at the 12 post office in the place of such printing and In the event in a county no newspaper 13 publication. 14 entered as second class postal matter and satisfying 15 the requirements of this section is published and 16 printed or has its principal place of business in such 17 county, any legal notices, legal advertising or other 18 matter required by law to be published in a newspaper 19 said be published in a in county may newspaper 20 satisfying such requirements except that ÷τ is 21 published and printed or has its principal place of 22 business in an adjoining county-Nothing herein 23 contained shall be construed to alter or in any way 24 affect the existing law governing the foreclosure of 25 real estate mortgages, chattel mortgages or any 26 conditional-sales-contract-by-publication-

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Sec. 2. 3 MRSA §121 is amended to read:

28 §121. Notice of petitions affecting individuals 29 or corporations

30 Notice of any petition for legislation, affecting rights of individuals or corporations, may be 31 the 32 given by serving them with a true copy of the petition 33 at least 14 days before the commencement of the next 34 by publishing such 3 session, or copy weeks 35 successively in some newspaper printed a newspaper 36 of general circulation in the counties in which such 37 individuals reside or such corporations are 38 established; or if no newspaper is there published; then in the state paper, the last publication to be 39 40 at least 14 days before the session. Ιf further service is deemed necessary, or if notice is defective 41

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or insufficient, further notice may be ordered.

Sec. 3. 3 MRSA §125 is amended to read:

Notice of petitions for special legislation §125. pertaining to fish and game

Notice of petitions, bills or resolves for special legislation, regarding or in any manner pertaining to fish or game, shall be given with full description of the territory or waters affected by such legislation, 8 weekly publication nearest a newspaper in some of general circulation in the locality so affected, at least once a week for 8 consecutive weeks, the last notice to be not less than one, nor more than 3 weeks before the assembling of the Legislature of which such legislation is requested, and such notice shall be absolutely required before any such legislation shall All laws hereafter enacted pertaining to be enacted. fish or game which do not conform to the general laws of the State shall for the purposes of this section be This section shall not apply to any deemed special. or resolve, petition, Act either repealing or amendatory, which has for its object the placing of the territory or waters in question under the general laws of the State.

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Sec. 4. 6 MRSA §243, sub-§1 is amended to read:

25 Adoption of zoning regulations. No airport 1. 26 regulations shall be adopted, zoning amended or 27 changed under this chapter, except by action of the legislative body of the political subdivision in question, or the joint board provided for in section 28 29 30 241, after a public hearing in relation thereto, at 31 which parties in interest and citizens shall have an opportunity to be heard. At least 15 days' notice of the hearing shall be published in an official paper; 32 33 34 Θř paper newspaper of general circulation, a in 35 the political subdivision or subdivisions in which the 36 airport is located.

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10 MRSA §1651 is amended to read: Sec. 5.

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§1651. Description of marks filed

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All persons or corporations engaged in the sale of 1 2 kerosene, refined petroleum, gasoline or other burning or illuminating oils or fluids, in cans of a capacity 3 of not less than 5 gallons, with their names or other 4 5 marks or devices branded, stamped, engraved, etched, 6 impressed or otherwise produced upon such cans or anything connected therewith or appertaining thereto, may file in the office of the town or city clerk, in 7 8 which their principal place of business is situated, a 9 description of the names and marks used by them, and 10 cause the same to be published once a week for 3 11 of 12 successive weeks in any newspaper published 13 general circulation in the county in which said the 14 notice may have been filed.

15 Sec. 6. 13 MRSA §41 is amended to read:

16 §41. First meeting

17 The first meeting of any corporation chartered by special act of the Legislature, unless otherwise 18 19 provided, shall be called by a notice signed by some person named in the act of incorporation, setting 20 forth the time, place and purpose of the meeting, a 21 copy of which shall be delivered to each member or published in a newspaper of general circulation in the 22 23 24 county, if any, otherwise in the state paper, 7 25 days before the meeting.

26 Sec. 7. 13 MRSA §2692 is amended to read:

27 §2692. Notice

28 If the lands lie in one or more incorporated towns, a notice in writing shall be posted in some public place in each, and published in the state paper, and in one of the newspapers printed of 29 30 31 general circulation in the county where any part of 32 33 them lies, 14 days before the meeting; but if not, in the state paper, and in one other newspaper, if any, in the county where any part of them lies, 4 34 35 weeks successively next before the meeting; or the 36 meeting may be warned by posting written notifications 37 38 in some public place in each town where any proprietor

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1 resides, 14 days before the time appointed therefor.

Sec. 8. 14 MRSA §712 is amended to read:

<u>§712. Service in actions for breach of duty of</u> officer where principal out of State

5 In actions against sheriffs, deputy sheriffs and 6 constables for breach of official duty where the principal defendant is out of the State, service may 7 8 be made on such defendant by delivering a copy of the 9 summons and of the complaint to each of the sureties 10 on his official bond 14 days before the return day 11 thereof, and the Superior Court may order further notice to the defendant by publication of an abstract of the complaint and order thereon in some newspaper 12 13 published a newspaper of general circulation in the 14 15 county where the complaint is returnable, or in the state paper or in such other manner as the court 16 directs. If the order is complied with and proved, the 17 18 defendant shall answer to the action and judgment in 19 such case has the same effect as if personal service 20 was made upon the principal defendant.

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Sec. 9. 14 MRSA §2202 is amended to read:

22 §2202. Notice of sale

23 The officer in such case shall give written notice 24 of the time and place of sale to the debtor in person or by leaving the same at his last and usual place of 25 26 abode, if known to be an inhabitant of the State, and 27 cause it to be posted in a public place in the town where the land lies and in 2 adjoining towns, if so many adjoin; and if the land is situated in 2 or more 28 29 30 towns, then in each of those towns and in 2 towns 31 adjoining each of them; and if the land is in 2 or more counties and is contiguous, an officer in either 32 county may take or seize on execution all the right of 33 34 the debtor in such land, give, post and cause the 35 notices to be published as required, and sell the whole right. When the land is not within any town, the 36 notice shall be posted in 2 public places of the shire 37 38 town of the county in which the land lies, instead of the posting aforesaid. When the debtor is not a 39

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resident of such county, the personal notice may be 1 2 forwarded to him by mail, postage paid; all to be done 3 30 days before the day of sale. The notice shall be published for 3 weeks successively before the day of 4 sale in a newspaper printed in whole or in part of 5 6 general circulation in such county7 if any, otherwise-in-the-state-paper. 7

8 Sec. 10. 14 MRSA §4851 is amended to read:

9 §4851. Notice of sale

10 When judgment is recovered against a bridge, canal 11 other incorporated company with power to receive or toll, its franchise may be sold on execution at public 12 auction by giving notice of the time and place of sale 13 by posting a notification in any town in which the 14 treasurer, clerk or any officer thereof, if there are any officers, and if not, where any stockholder 15 16 resides, for 30 days at least before the day of sale, 17 18 and by causing an advertisement, naming the creditor thereon, to be inserted for 3 weeks successively in a 19 20 newspaper printed <u>of general circulation</u> county where either of said officers, or, īn а if 21 the 22 company is without officers, where any stockholder resides, the last publication being at least 4 days before the day of sale; and if there is no newspaper 23 24 25 printed-in-any-such-county--then-in-the-state-paper.

26 Sec. 11. 14 MRSA §4905 is amended to read:

27 §4905. Notice of sale

28 In selling such shares or interest, the officer 29 holding the execution shall give notice in writing of the time and place of sale to the debtor, by leaving 30 it at his last and usual place of abode if within the 31 32 county where the officer dwells, otherwise by forwarding it to him by mail if his residence is known 33 to such officer, postage paid, whether within or without the State and public notice thereof by posting 34 35 36 it in one or more public places in the town where the sale is to be made and in 2 adjoining towns, if there 37 are so many, 30 days at least before the day of sale; and shall publish an advertisement of the same import, 38 39

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1 naming the judgment debtor, for 3 weeks successively 2 before the day of sale in some <u>a</u> newspaper 3 printed of general circulation in the county, ÷f 4 any;-if-not;-in-the-state-paper.

Sec. 12. 14 MRSA §4952 is amended to read:

6 §4952. Notice and incidents of sale

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7 The officer shall advertise in the state paper and 8 in one оf the newspapers printed a newspaper of 9 general circulation in the county where the lands lie, if any, for 3 weeks successively, the names of such 10 proprietors as are known to him, of the lands which he 11 12 proposes to sell, with the amount of the execution or of distress. Where the names the warrant of proprietors are not known, he shall publish the numbers of the lots or divisions of said land and the last publication shall be 3 months before the time appointed for the sale. If necessary to complete the sale, he may adjourn it from day to day not exceeding 3 days. He shall give a deed to the purchaser of said land in fee, expressing therein the cause of sale. The proprietor of the land so sold may redeem it within a year after the sale by paying the sum for which it was sold, the necessary charges and interest thereon.

24 14 MRSA §6203, sub-§1, as amended by Sec. 13. 25 PL 1973, c. 625, §84, is further amended to read:

26 1. <u>Public notice</u>. He may give public notice in a newspaper, as defined, having its principal place of 27 28 business of general circulation in the county where 29 the premises are situated, if any, or if not, in a 30 newspaper, as defined, having its principal place of business of general circulation in an adjoining 31 32 county, if any, or if not, in the state paper, - 3 33 weeks successively, of his claim by mortgage on such 34 real estate, describing the premises intelligibly and 35 naming the date of the mortgage and that the condition 36 in it is broken, by reason whereof he claims a foreclosure; and cause a copy of such printed notice, and the name and date of the newspaper in which it was 37 38 39 last published, to be recorded in each registry in 40 which the mortgage deed is or by law ought to be

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recorded, within 30 days after such last publication. 1 2 A11 foreclosures of real estate mortgages between 3 September 3, 1965 and February 8, 1966 and otherwise 4 valid, except that public notice was given in а 5 newspaper published and printed in whole or in part in 6 the county where the premises are located rather than in a newspaper having its principal place of business in the county where the premises are located, are validated. For the purpose of this section a newspaper 7 8 9 10 defined as one printed in the shall be English language and entered as second-class postal matter in 11 12 the United States mails.

13 Sec. 14. 14 MRSA §6203-A, first ¶, as enacted 14 by PL 1967, c. 424, §2, is amended to read:

15 §6203-A. Power of sale; procedure; notice; form

16 Any mortgagee of real estate of a corporation 17 having a mortgage containing a power of sale, or his 18 assignee, or a person authorized by the power of sale, or the attorney duly authorized by a writing under 19 20 the person acting in the name of seal, or such 21 mortgagee or person, may, upon breach of condition and without action, do all the acts authorized or required 22 by the power; but no sale under such power shall be 23 24 effectual to foreclose a mortgage unless, previous to 25 such sale, notice thereof has been published once in each of 3 successive weeks, the first publication to 26 before the day of 27 be not less than 21 days the 28 ÷£ published sale₇ in newspaper7 of а any, 29 general circulation in the town where the land lies. If no newspaper is published in such town, notice may be published in a newspaper published in the county 30 31 32 where the land lies, and this This provision shall be implied in every power of sale mortgage in which it is 33 34 not expressly set forth. A newspaper which ₽A its 35 title page purports to be printed or published in such 36 town, eity or county, and having circulation therein, 37 shall be sufficient for the purpose. A copy of said 38 notice shall be served on the mortgagor or its 39 representative in sent interest, or may be bv 40 registered mail addressed to it or such representative at its last known address, or to such person and to 41 42 such address as may be agreed upon in

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said mortgage, at least 21 days before the date of the sale under the power in the mortgage.

Sec. 15. 14 MRSA §6308 is amended to read:

§6308. Notice by publication

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When an amount due on a mortgage has been paid or 6 tendered to the mortgagee or person claiming under him before foreclosure of the mortgage, and the mortgagee or his assignee is out of the State and the mortgage is undischarged on the record, the mortgagor or person claiming under him may maintain a civil action for the redemption of the mortgaged premises, as provided in section 6304, or for the discharge of the mortgage. On notice of the pendency of the action, given by publication in some newspaper a newspaper of general circulation in the county where said premises situated for 3 weeks successively, the last are publication being 30 days before the time of hearing, or in such other way as the Superior Court orders, said court may decree a discharge of such mortgage. The record of such decree in the registry of deeds where said mortgage is recorded is evidence of such discharge.

23 Sec. 16. 15 MRSA §2161, as amended by PL 1975, 24 c. 771, §158, is further amended to read:

25 §2161. Notice to district attorney and Attorney 26 General of all petitions for pardon or 27 commutation

28 On all petitions to the Governor for pardon or 29 commutation of sentences, written notice thereof shall 30 given to the Attorney General and the district be attorney for the county where the case was tried at 31 32 least 4 weeks before the time of the hearing thereon, 33 and 4 weeks' notice in some a newspaper having 34 its principal place оf business of general 35 circulation in said county. If the crime for which 36 said pardon is asked or for which commutation of 37 sentence is sought is punishable by imprisonment in the State Prison, the Attorney General or the district 38 39 attorney for the county where the case was tried

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shall, upon the request of the Governor, attend the 1 2 meeting of the Governor or the Parole Board at which 3 the petition is to be heard and the Governor shall allow said district attorney his necessary expenses 4 5 for such attendance and a reasonable compensation for б said district attorney's services to be paid from the State Treasury out of the appropriation for costs in criminal prosecutions. The Governor may require the 7 8 9 judge and prosecuting officer who tried the case to 10 furnish him or the Parole Board a concise statement thereof as proved at the trial and any other facts 11 12 bearing on the propriety of granting pardon or 13 commutation.

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Sec. 17. 30 MRSA §3305 is amended to read:

15 §3305. Notice of meeting

16 Notice of said the meeting shall be served at 17 least 14 days previous to the time appointed therefor, 18 when all the proprietors reside in the town where the land lies, by reading the warrant to each proprietor, or giving him a copy in hand, or by leaving a copy at 19 20 21 his usual place of abode. In case one or more of the proprietors reside without the town or plantation, notice of such the meeting shall be given them by 22 23 copy of such the warrant 24 publishing a in some newspaper printed of general circulation 25 the in county or in the state paper 3 weeks successively, the last publication to be at least 14 days before the 26 27 28 time appointed for said the meeting.

29 Sec. 18. 30 MRSA §4002, as amended by PL 1975, 30 c. 431, §13, is further amended to read:

31 §4002. Proceedings by municipal officers

32 Whenever the municipal officers of such 33 municipality are directed to take land as provided in section 4001, they shall, within 10 days, give written notice of their intention to take such land, 34 35 describing the same and the time and place of hearing, 36 37 by posting the same in 2 public places in the municipality where the land lies and in the vicinity 38 thereof, and by publishing the same in a newspaper 39

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printed of general circulation in such municipality, 7 days before the day of such hearing, 1 2 if any7 otherwise in a newspaper printed in the county where the land lies, 3 weeks successively, the last publication to be 7 days before such hearing. The municipal officers shall meet at the time and place specified in the notice, view the land to be taken, hear all parties interested and if they decide that the land is suitable for the purpose, they shall take the same and estimate the damages to be paid to each owner, so far as known, in the same manner as provided by statute for land taken for highway purposes under Title 23, chapter 3, and make return of their doings in writing, signed by a majority of them, which return shall describe by metes and bounds the land so taken and state the purpose for which it is taken, the names of the owners so far as known, and the amount of damages awarded to each. The return shall be filed of and recorded in the clerk's office such municipality and a copy thereof, certified by such clerk, shall be recorded in the registry of deeds for said county.

23 Sec. 19. 30 MRSA §4154, as amended by PL 1981, 24 c. 456, Pt. A, §104, is further amended to read:

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§4154. Proceedings by committee; record

26 The members of the committee mentioned in section 27 4153, before acting, shall be sworn before a notary 28 public, and a certificate thereof shall be indorsed on 29 They shall give notice of the warrant. their appointment, and of the time and place of 30 their 31 meeting to execute it, by publishing it in some a newspaper of general circulation in the State, to be 32 33 designated by the court, and by posting written notification in 2 or more public places in the same plantation or town, if so ordered by the court, at 34 35 36 least 30 days next prior to their meeting. They shall 37 make return of said warrant and their doings thereon, 38 under their hands, to the next Superior Court in the county after having completed service; which, being 39 40 accepted by the court and recorded in the registry of 41 deeds in the county or registry district where the land is situated, within 6 months, shall be a legal 42

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1 assignment and location of such public reserved lot or 2 lots.

3 Sec. 20. 30 MRSA §4160 is amended to read:

4 §4160. Notice of appointment and meeting

5 The members of the committee shall give notice of 6 their appointment and of the time and place of their 7 meeting to execute the same, by publishing the same some a newspaper of general circulation in the 8 in State to be designated by the court, and by posting written notifications in 2 or more public places in 9 10 the same town, at least 30 days before making such 11 12 location.

13 Sec. 21. 30 MRSA §4451, sub-\$1, as amended by 14 PL 1987, c. 23, is further amended to read:

15 Estimate and assessment of costs; notice. 1. 16 When any town or sewer district has constructed and 17 completed a public drain or common sewer, the 18 municipal officers or sewer district trustees shall 19 determine what lots or parcels of land are benefited 20 by the drain or sewer, and shall estimate and assess upon the lots and parcels of land and against the 21 22 owner thereof or person in possession, or against whom 23 the taxes thereon are assessed, whether the person to 24 whom the assessment is so made shall be the owner, tenant, lessee or agent and whether the same is 25 26 occupied or not, the sum not exceeding the benefit 27 they may deem just and equitable towards defraying the expenses of constructing and completing the drain or 28 29 sewer, together with any sewage disposal units and appurtenances that may be necessary, and in operation 30 after May 31, 1979, the whole of the assessments not to exceed 1/2 the cost of the drain or sewer and 31 32 33 sewage disposal units, and the drain or sewer shall 34 forever thereafter be maintained and kept in repair by 35 the town or sewer district. The municipal officers or sewer district trustees shall file with the clerk of. 36 37 the town the location of the drain or sewer and sewage 38 disposal unit, with a profile description of the same, 39 and a statement of the amount assessed upon each lot 40 or parcel of land so assessed, and the name of the

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the lots or parcels of land or persons owner of against whom the assessment is made, and the clerk of the town and the sewer district trustees shall record the assessment in a book kept for that purpose, and within 10 days after filing notice each person so assessed shall be notified of the assessment by having an authentic copy of the assessment, with an order of notice signed by the clerk of the town or the chairman of the sewer district trustees stating the time and place for a hearing upon the subject matter of the assessments, given to each person so assessed or left at his usual place of abode in the town. If he has no place of abode in the town, then the notice shall be given or left at the abode of his tenant or lessee, if he has one in the town; if he has no tenant or lessee in the town, then by posting the notice in some conspicuous place in the vicinity of the lot or parcel of land so assessed, at least 30 days before the hearing; or the notice may be given by publishing it 3 weeks successively in any newspaper published of general circulation in the town, the first publication to be at least 30 days before the hearing. A return made upon a copy of the notice by any constable in the town or the production of the paper containing the notice shall be conclusive evidence that the notice was given, and upon the hearing the municipal officers or sewer district trustees shall have power to revise, increase or diminish any of the assessments, and any revisions, increase or diminution shall be in writing and recorded by the clerk and the sewer district trustees.

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A. For the purposes of this section only, sewer district means a quasi-municipal corporation, as defined in section 5053, established to construct and operate sewerage systems to assist in the abatement of the pollution of public streams, lakes and inland and ocean waters.

38 Sec. 22. 30 MRSA §5309, 2nd ¶ is amended to 39 read:

40 The Attorney General shall appear for and on 41 behalf of the petitioner in such proceedings and the 42 expense thereof shall be paid from any funds in the

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hands of said commissioner or commissioners in charge 1 2 of the affairs of said municipality. The court may 3 all fix а time within which persons, firms or 4 corporations holding claims or demands against the such municipality shall 5 inhabitants of file their 6 claim or demand for adjudication of its validity as an 7 obligation of said municipality. The court shall 8 order public notice to creditors of the inhabitants of the municipality to file their claims within the time 9 specified, by publication in a newspaper published 10 or printed of general circulation in the county 11 in said municipality is located, and 12 which ÷£ no 13 newspaper is published or printed in said county, then 14 in the state paper, for at least 3 successive weeks, 15 the last publication to be at least 30 days before the 16 final date set by the court for filing claims against the inhabitants of said municipality, and the court 17 may order such additional notice to be given as in its 18 19 discretion may be proper and necessary.

20 Sec. 23. 36 MRSA §1281, as amended by PL 1981, 21 c. 706, §\$13 and 14, is further amended to read:

22 <u>§1281. Payment of taxes; delinquent taxes;</u> 23 publication; certificate filed in registry

24 Taxes on real estate mentioned in section 1602, 25 including supplementary taxes assessed under section 26 1331, shall be delinquent on the first day of February next following the date of assessment. Annually, on or before February 20th, the State Tax Assessor shall 27 28 29 send by mail to the last known address of each owner 30 of such real estate upon which taxes remain unpaid a 31 notice in writing, containing a description of the 32 real estate assessed, the amount of unpaid taxes and 33 interest, and alleging that a lien is claimed on that real estate for payment of those taxes, interests and 34 35 costs, with a demand that payment be made by the next 36 March 1st. In case the owners of any such real estate are unknown, instead of sending the notices by mail, 37 38 shall cause the information required in he this 39 section on such real estate to be advertised in the 40 state paper and in some newspaper, if any, 41 general circulation in the county in published of 42 which the real estate lies. Such a statement or

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advertisement shall be sufficient legal notice of delinguent taxes. If those taxes and interest to date of payment and costs are not paid by March 1st, the State Tax Assessor shall record by March 15th, in the registry of deeds of the county or registry district where the real estate lies, a certificate signed by him, setting forth the name or names of the owners according to the last state valuation, or the valuation established in accordance with section 1331; the description of the real estate assessed as contained in the last state valuation, the or valuation established in accordance with section 1331; the amount of unpaid taxes and interest; the amount of costs; and a statement that demand for payment of those taxes has been made, and that those taxes, interest and costs remain unpaid. The costs to be charged by the register of deeds for such filing shall not exceed \$5.

STATEMENT OF FACT

20 The purpose of this bill is to make corrective 21 changes in the laws relating to the publication of 22 legal notices in newspapers. It is intended to ensure 23 consistency in the way that these laws describe the 24 newspaper in which required publication is to occur. 25 Presently, there exist various descriptions of 26 newspapers in which such publication is required. 27 Some of these descriptions are vague, merely requiring publication of notices in "some newpaper published" in 28 29 overly а county or town. Other descriptions are 30 explicit, requiring publication of notices in а 31 newspaper printed or published in a locality. These varying requirements do not ensure that publication of notices reach their target audiences, which is the 32 33 34 purpose of publication. This bill establishes а 35 consistent standard for publication of these notices by requiring that publication of legal notices occurs in a newspaper of general circulation in the locality 36 37 38 where the target audience resides.

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