

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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LAWS
OF THE
STATE OF MAINE

AS PASSED BY THE

ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION
January 3, 2024 to May 10, 2024

THE GENERAL EFFECTIVE DATE FOR
SECOND REGULAR SESSION
NON-EMERGENCY LAWS IS
AUGUST 9, 2024

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

Augusta, Maine
2024

implement the children's behavioral health services plan for Maine developed by the department's Office of Child and Family Services; and

3. A summary of the department's current priorities to ensure the availability, quality and consistency of and access to behavioral health care services for children.

The joint standing committee may report out legislation related to the report to the 132nd Legislature in 2025.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

Effective March 28, 2024.

**CHAPTER 159
H.P. 1382 - L.D. 2158**

**Resolve, to Improve the
Housing Voucher System and
Reduce the Number of
Voucher Expirations**

Sec. 1. Maine State Housing Authority to establish stakeholder group. Resolved: That the Maine State Housing Authority shall establish a stakeholder group to improve the system that governs the distribution and use of housing vouchers. For the purposes of this resolve, "housing voucher" means a tenant-based housing choice voucher issued under Section 8 of the United States Housing Act of 1937, Public Law 75-412, 50 Stat. 888, as amended.

Sec. 2. Membership. Resolved: That the membership of the stakeholder group established pursuant to section 1 is as follows:

1. Four members who represent local housing authorities who distribute housing vouchers, including at least 2 members who distribute housing vouchers to be used in rural areas of the State;
2. Four members who provide housing navigation services to tenants who use income-based rental assistance programs, including one member who provides services through a housing authority operated by a federally recognized Indian tribe and one member who provides assistance at homeless shelters;
3. One member who has experience providing legal advice or assistance related to the use of housing vouchers;
4. One member who has experience administering municipal general assistance;
5. The executive director of the Maine Human Rights Commission or the executive director's designee; and

6. Staff from the Maine State Housing Authority with experience in housing voucher distribution and the process for requesting a waiver from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development asking for an adjustment to the fair market rent rate amount used when determining housing voucher amounts.

Sec. 3. Duties. Resolved: That the stakeholder group under section 1 shall:

1. Outline the process for requesting a waiver from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development seeking an increase of the fair market rent for any particular area of the State and, if a waiver is granted, how it allows local housing authorities to enter into contracts with landlords at the highest rent allowed pursuant to that waiver;
2. Determine how many local housing authorities have requested fair market rent waivers from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, how and when each such request was made and the outcome of the requests;
3. Determine how many local housing authorities have not requested fair market rent waivers from the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development and the reason for each such decision, including the identification of barriers cited by the local housing authorities;
4. Develop a list of all of the programs administered by local housing authorities that create additional housing units, including housing units for which housing vouchers will be used to pay for rent;
5. Consider strategies to support local housing authorities with the submission of United States Department of Housing and Urban Development waiver requests, including using the assistance of the Maine State Housing Authority to assist in administration of that waiver request process;
6. Develop a chart that outlines the rules governing the use of housing vouchers distributed by the Maine State Housing Authority as well as local housing authorities, including but not limited to the time frames associated with securing housing using a housing voucher and housing voucher expiration;
7. Identify any flexibility that exists regarding the distribution and use of housing vouchers, including but not limited to the time frame within which a housing voucher must be used prior to its expiration and the ability to use a housing voucher in an area of the State outside of the area for which it was issued;
8. Consider strategies to improve outreach and education to landlords with the goal of increasing the number of landlords who accept tenants who use housing vouchers or other income-based rental assistance; and

9. Make recommendations, excluding the development of more housing stock, to maximize the acceptance of housing vouchers by landlords and increase flexibility in the use of housing vouchers, including but not limited to housing voucher expiration, submitting United States Department of Housing and Urban Development waiver requests and amendments to rules of the Maine State Housing Authority.

Sec. 4. Report. Resolved: That, no later than January 15, 2025, the Maine State Housing Authority shall submit a report on the findings and recommendations of the stakeholder group under section 1 to the joint select or joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over housing matters. The committee receiving the report is authorized to submit legislation based on the report to the 132nd Legislature in 2025.

See title page for effective date.

CHAPTER 160

H.P. 1427 - L.D. 2226

Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Chapter 213: Rules for the Salmonella Enteritidis Risk Reduction and Surveillance Program for Commercial Egg-type Flocks, a Late-filed Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A requires legislative authorization before major substantive agency rules may be finally adopted by the agency; and

Whereas, a major substantive rule has been submitted to the Legislature outside the legislative rule acceptance period; and

Whereas, immediate enactment of this resolve is necessary to record the Legislature's position on final adoption of the rule; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1. Adoption. Resolved: That final adoption of Chapter 213: Rules for the Salmonella Enteritidis Risk Reduction and Surveillance Program for Commercial Egg-type Flocks, a provisionally adopted major substantive rule of the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry that has been submitted to the Legislature for review pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A outside the legislative rule acceptance period, is authorized, and the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry may make grammatical, formatting, punctuation and other technical, nonsubstantive editing changes to the rule as necessary prior to final adoption, including, but not limited to, any such changes necessary to ensure that the rule is correctly chaptered as Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry rule Chapter 213.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.

Effective April 2, 2024.

CHAPTER 161

S.P. 959 - L.D. 2239

Resolve, to Rename a Bridge in the Town of Mechanic Falls the Bill Dunlop Memorial Bridge

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, Bridge 2540 on Elm Street in the Town of Mechanic Falls is slated for renovation in 2025; and

Whereas, this legislation provides for the renaming of Bridge 2540; and

Whereas, it is imperative that this legislation take effect as soon as possible in order to timely expedite the renaming process prior to the beginning of the renovation process; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1. Bridge in Mechanic Falls renamed. Resolved: That the Department of Transportation shall designate Bridge 2540 on Elm Street in the Town of Mechanic Falls, currently known as the Mechanic Falls Bridge, the Bill Dunlop Memorial Bridge.