

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE
116TH LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

BILL SUMMARIES
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE
ON
UTILITIES

MAY 1994

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**ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTEENTH LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION**

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE
BILL SUMMARIES**

MAY 1994

This document is a compilation of the bill summaries prepared by this office for the Joint Standing Committees and Joint Select Committees of the Maine Legislature. The volume is organized alphabetically by committee; within each committee, the summaries are arranged by LD number. A subject index is provided at the beginning of each committee's summaries.

The committee report or reports, the prime sponsor for each bill and the lead co-sponsor in each house if one has been designated are listed below each bill title. All adopted amendments are listed, by paper number, together with the sponsor for floor amendments. Final action on each bill is listed to the right of the title. Various types of final action are abbreviated as follows:

PUBLIC XXX

P&S XXX

RESOLVE XXX

CON RES XXX

EMERGENCY

ONTP

INDEF PP

FAILED ENACTMENT

FAILED EMERGENCY ENACTMENT

FAILED MANDATE ENACTMENT

DIED BETWEEN BODIES

CONF CMTE UNABLE TO AGREE

VETO SUSTAINED

UNSIGNED

DIED ON ADJOURNMENT

Chapter # of enacted Public Law

Chapter # of enacted Private & Special Law

Chapter # of enacted Resolve

Chapter # of Constitutional Resolution passed by both Houses

Enacted law takes effect sooner than 90 days

Ought Not to Pass report accepted

Bill Indefinitely Postponed

Bill failed to get majority vote

Emergency bill failed to get 2/3 vote

Bill imposing local mandate failed to get 2/3 vote

House & Senate disagree; bill died

Committee of Conference unable to agree; bill died

Legislature failed to override Governor's Veto

Not signed by Governor within 10 days

Action incomplete when session ended; bill died

These summaries were prepared by the analyst or analysts assigned to the committee. If you have any suggestions or comments on the summaries, please let us know.

5581LHS

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-398) clarifies that the limitation on late fees associated with cable television services is 1.5% per month (the maximum amount permitted under the Consumer Credit Code). The amendment also adds a fiscal note to the bill.

This bill was chaptered as Public Law 513 prior to the end of the session. A Senate amendment was attached to L.D. 1483 amending this law. The amendment made no substantive changes. (See L.D. 1483.)

LD 1601 An Act to Ensure That State Water Utility Rules Are PUBLIC 514
Consistent with Federal Requirements

SPONSOR(S)	COMMITTEE REPORT	AMENDMENTS ADOPTED
VOSE	OTP-AM	S-407

SUMMARY

This bill proposed to prohibit the Commissioner of Human Services from adopting rules regarding safe drinking water that are more stringent than federal law or regulations unless specifically authorized by law.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-407) provides that the Commissioner of the Human Services is proscribed from imposing on a water utility any standard, method or procedure concerning safe drinking water that is more stringent than required under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act or federal regulations adopted pursuant to that Act.

LD 1606 An Act to Amend the Charter of the Portland Water District P & S 58
EMERGENCY

SPONSOR(S)	COMMITTEE REPORT	AMENDMENTS ADOPTED
TAYLOR	OTP-AM	H-715

SUMMARY

This bill amends the charter of the Portland Water District to clarify the dates on which the election of trustees occur. The bill also provides that the district share in the costs of an election in proportion to the number of offices and referenda being voted upon at the election. Finally, the bill defines the term "person holding municipal office" for purposes of determining eligibility to serve as a trustee.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (H-715) adds a municipal mandate preamble, makes technical corrections and adds a fiscal note to the bill.

LD 1616 An Act to Make Changes to the Public Utilities Commission PUBLIC 589
Laws

SPONSOR(S)	COMMITTEE REPORT	AMENDMENTS ADOPTED
VOSE	OTP-AM	S-465

SUMMARY

Currently, consumer-owned water and electric utilities may change rates on an expedited basis. Current law allows the utility's ratepayers to petition the Public Utilities Commission to suspend and investigate the proposed rate change. This bill requires petitions to include the signature, printed name and address of the signer and, under certain circumstances, allows the petitioners 7 days to provide the necessary information that is missing from the original petition. The purpose of this change is to facilitate the determination of the validity of the signatures.

The bill also requires the utility to notify customers of the new petition requirement and, upon request, to provide the customer with petition forms.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-465) adds a fiscal note and a mandate preamble to the bill. The amendment also redrafts several sections of the bill for purposes of clarity and

1. Corrects certain errors in laws affecting the Public Utilities Commission;
2. Corrects the reference to the titles of several positions at the commission that were changed in the last session of the Legislature;
3. Extends the sunset on the law relating to the transport of unscheduled freight in Casco Bay from July 15, 1994 to July 15, 1996; and
4. Adds new language specifically allowing customers who are not hearing-impaired who call hearing-impaired persons directly to receive, on request, a 70% discount on the call charges.

**LD 1621 An Act to Protect Utility Consumers from Bearing
Responsibility for Utility Mismanagement**

PUBLIC 506

SPONSOR(S)
ESTY

COMMITTEE REPORT
OTP-AM

AMENDMENTS ADOPTED
S-392

SUMMARY

Current law permits the Public Utilities Commission, in determining just and reasonable rates, to consider whether a utility is operating efficiently and using sound management practices. This bill requires the Public Utilities Commission to consider those issues in determining rates.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-392) makes clear that the Public Utilities Commission has full discretion in determining the level of its scrutiny of utility management practices in its determination of just and reasonable rates.

LD 1639 An Act to Amend the Boothbay Harbor Sewer District Charter

P & S 59
EMERGENCY

SPONSOR(S)
HEINO
BEGLEY

COMMITTEE REPORT
OTP-AM

AMENDMENTS ADOPTED
H-732

SUMMARY

This bill enlarges the territorial limits of the Boothbay Harbor Sewer District by authorizing the district to acquire, construct, maintain and operate a sewer system to serve a portion of the Adams Pond watershed in the Town of Boothbay.

This bill proposed to revise the charter by extending to the district the same collection enforcement powers that are available to municipalities for purposes of property tax collection.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (H-732) makes the following changes to the bill:

1. Amends the title to better reflect the amended content of the bill;
2. Adds a municipal mandate preamble to the bill and strikes section 4 of the bill dealing with local cost impacts;