

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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**STATE OF MAINE
117TH LEGISLATURE**

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

**BILL SUMMARIES
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE
ON
TRANSPORTATION**

JUNE 1996

MEMBERS:

*Sen. Albert G. Stevens, Jr., Chair
Sen. Vinton E. Cassidy
Sen. Judy A. Paradis*

*Rep. Donald A. Strout, Chair
Rep. William B. O'Gara
Rep. George F. Ricker
Rep. Joseph D. Driscoll
Rep. Gerald N. Bouffard
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Rep. Charles H. Heino
Rep. David A. Lindahl*

Staff:

Jill Ippoliti, Legislative Analyst

*Office of Policy and Legal Analysis
Room 101/107/135, 13 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
(207)287-1670*



**Maine State Legislature
OFFICE OF POLICY AND LEGAL ANALYSIS**

13 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0013
Telephone: (207) 287-1670
Fax: (207) 287-1275

**ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION**

**Summary Of Legislation Before The Joint Standing Committees
June 1996**

We are pleased to provide this summary of bills that were considered by the 15 Joint Standing Committees of the Maine Legislature staffed by this office. The document is a compilation of bill summaries which describe each bill, committee amendments and other relevant amendments, as well as the final action taken on the bill. Also included are statistical summaries of bill activity this Session for the Legislature and each of its joint standing committees.

The document is organized for convenient reference to information on bills handled by the joint standing committees. It is organized alphabetically by committees and within committees by bill (LD) number. The committee report(s), prime sponsor for each bill and the lead co-sponsor(s), if designated, are listed below each bill title. All adopted amendments are listed by paper number. Two indices, a subject index and a numerical index by LD number are provided for easy reference to bills. They are located at the back of the document. A separate publication, History and Final Disposition of Legislative Documents, may also be helpful in providing information on the disposition of bills.

Final action on each bill is noted to the right of the bill title. The abbreviations used for various categories of final action are as follows:

<i>CARRIED OVER</i>	<i>Bill carried over to Second Session</i>
<i>CON RES XXX</i>	<i>Chapter # of Constitutional Resolution passed by both Houses</i>
<i>CONF CMTE UNABLE TO AGREE</i>	<i>Committee of Conference unable to agree; bill died</i>
<i>DIED BETWEEN BODIES</i>	<i>House & Senate disagree; bill died</i>
<i>DIED ON ADJOURNMENT</i>	<i>Action incomplete when session ended; bill died</i>
<i>EMERGENCY</i>	<i>Enacted law takes effect sooner than 90 days</i>
<i>FAILED EMERGENCY ENACTMENT</i>	<i>Emergency bill failed to get 2/3 vote</i>
<i>FAILED ENACTMENT</i>	<i>Bill failed to get majority vote</i>
<i>FAILED MANDATE ENACTMENT</i>	<i>Bill imposing local mandate failed to get 2/3 vote</i>
<i>INDEF PP</i>	<i>Bill Indefinitely Postponed</i>
<i>ONTP</i>	<i>Ought Not To Pass report accepted</i>
<i>P&S XXX</i>	<i>Chapter # of enacted Private & Special Law</i>
<i>PUBLIC XXX</i>	<i>Chapter # of enacted Public Law</i>
<i>RESOLVE XXX</i>	<i>Chapter # of finally passed Resolve</i>
<i>UNSIGNED</i>	<i>Not signed by Governor within 10 days</i>
<i>VETO SUSTAINED</i>	<i>Legislature failed to override Governor's Veto</i>

Please note the effective date for all non-emergency legislation enacted in the Second Regular Session (unless otherwise specified in a particular law) is July 4, 1996.

Part C of the enacted law does the following.

It provides for a new general issue of registration plates to begin on July 1, 1999 and be completed by December 31, 2000. It repeals language designating the lobster design as the general issue plate design on July 1, 1999 and allows the Secretary of State to purchase a specialty plate rather than produce the plate at the Maine State Prison when the demand for that plate is low. It increases the fee for reserving license plate numbers effective July 1, 1996. Effective July 1, 1996, it increases motor vehicle registration fees by \$1 to cover equipment costs and other costs associated with a new general issue license plate.

It establishes a program within the Highway Fund to receive \$1 of each registration fee to be used for expenses relating to the production and issuance of license plates. It establishes a moratorium on the issuance of new specialty license plates until July 1, 1999. It creates a task force to study the production and issuance of license plates.

Chapter 645 was enacted as an emergency measure effective April 10, 1996.

LD 1676 **An Act to Implement the Recommendations of the Registration Improvement Committee** ONTP

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
O'GARA	ONTP	

LD 1676 proposed to enact the recommendations of the Secretary of State's Registration Improvement Committee. It would have allowed the Secretary of state to appoint nongovernmental entities as registration agents and to implement a remote registration transactions program. It would have required the State Tax Assessor to certify software for the electronic calculation of motor vehicle excise tax. It would have allowed the Secretary of State and the Superintendent of Insurance to develop an alternate means of verifying motor vehicle liability insurance. It would have allowed the Secretary of State and nongovernmental registration agents to collect motor vehicle excise tax and required the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to transmit collected excise taxes to the appropriate municipality.

This bill proposed an optional multi-year fleet registration for registrants with 100 or more registrations. It proposed to require that excise tax be prorated for a vehicle added to a fleet with a common expiration date. Certain provisions of this legislation were enacted in Part B of P.L. 1995, c. 645. (see Bill Summary for LD 1639)

LD 1680 **An Act Concerning Portable Scale Tolerances on the Interstate Highway System** PUBLIC 517

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
O'GARA	OTP-AM	H-695

LD 1680 proposed allowing vehicles traveling on the Interstate Highway System a 4% tolerance on gross and axle weight limits if the vehicle was weighed by portable scales.

Committee Amendment "A" (H-695) proposed adding a fiscal note to the bill.

Enacted law summary

Public Law 1995, chapter 517 allows vehicles traveling on the Interstate Highway System a 4% tolerance on gross and axle weight limits if the vehicle is weighed by portable scales. This is consistent with federal regulations.

LD 1681 An Act Pertaining to the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority PUBLIC 543

<u>Sponsor(s)</u> O'GARA	<u>Committee Report</u> OTP	<u>Amendments Adopted</u> S-445
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LD 1681 proposed to clarify and to correct certain provisions of the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority's enabling act.

Senate Amendment "A" (S-445) proposed to remove the language in the original bill that stated the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority's rate-making authority is not "rulemaking" and is not subject to supervision by any board, commission or agency.

Enacted law summary

Public Law 1995, chapter 543 clarifies that the Northern New England Passenger Rail Authority is an authority within the meaning of the Maine Tort Claims Act. It removes the December 31, 1995 time frame for initiation of service between Boston and Portland. It clarifies that the quorum requirements for a meeting of the authority's board of directors are calculated on the basis of the number of director positions currently occupied.

LD 1682 An Act to Transfer the Responsibility for Air Search and Rescue from the Commissioner of Transportation to the Chief of the State Police PUBLIC 555

<u>Sponsor(s)</u> STROUT	<u>Committee Report</u> OTP-AM	<u>Amendments Adopted</u> H-740
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LD 1682 proposed to transfer responsibility for air search and rescue from the Commissioner of Transportation to the Chief of the State Police.

Committee Amendment "A" (H-740) proposed allowing the air search and rescue plan developed by the Chief of State Police to determine the notification system for and to specify the role of various agencies in air search and rescue operations.

Enacted law summary

Public Law 1995, chapter 555 transfers responsibility for air search and rescue from the Commissioner of Transportation to the Chief of the State Police and allows the plan developed by the Chief to specify the role of various agencies in air search and rescue operations.