

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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**STATE OF MAINE
119TH LEGISLATURE**

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

**BILL SUMMARIES
JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE
ON
UTILITIES AND ENERGY**

JULY 2000

MEMBERS:

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Sen. Carol A. Kontos

Sen. Betty Lou Mitchell

Rep. Thomas M. Davidson, Chair

Rep. Patrick Colwell

Rep. Charles C. LaVerdiere

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Staff:

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ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION

Summary Of Legislation Before The Joint Standing Committees
July 2000

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

The document is organized for convenient reference to information on bills considered by the committees. It is organized 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. These bill summaries also are available at the Law and Legislative Reference Library and on the Internet (www.state.me.us/legis/opla).

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:

CON RES XXX..... Chapter # of Constitutional Resolution passed by both Houses
CONF CMTE UNABLE TO AGREE..... Committee of Conference unable to agree; bill died
DIED BETWEEN BODIES..... House & Senate disagree; bill died
DIED IN CONCURRENCE..... One body accepts ONTP report; the other indefinitely postpones the bill
DIED ON ADJOURNMENT..... Action incomplete when session ended; bill died
EMERGENCY..... Enacted law takes effect sooner than 90 days
FAILED EMERGENCY ENACTMENT/FINAL PASSAGE..... Emergency bill failed to get 2/3 vote
FAILED ENACTMENT/FINAL PASSAGE..... Bill failed to get majority vote
FAILED MANDATE ENACTMENT..... Bill imposing local mandate failed to get 2/3 vote
NOT PROPERLY BEFORE THE BODY..... Ruled out of order by the presiding officers; bill died
INDEF PP..... Bill Indefinitely Postponed
ONTP..... Ought Not To Pass report accepted
OTP ND..... Committee report Ought To Pass In New Draft
OTP ND/NT..... Committee report Ought To Pass In New Draft/New Title
P&S XXX..... Chapter # of enacted Private & Special Law
PUBLIC XXX..... Chapter # of enacted Public Law
RESOLVE XXX..... Chapter # of finally passed Resolve
UNSIGNED..... Bill held by Governor
VETO SUSTAINED..... Legislature failed to override Governor's Veto

Please note the effective date for all non-emergency legislation enacted in the Second Regular Session (unless otherwise specified in a particular law) is August 11, 2000.

David E. Boulter, Director
Offices Located in the State House, Rooms 101 & 107

Enacted law summary

Private and Special Law 1999, chapter 63 protects the water supply maintained by the Portland Water District by changing the way that the restricted area around the intake pipes in Sebago Lake is measured. The law provides for a 3,000-foot no trespassing zone measured from the southernmost intake pipe. This ensures continued boating access to the channel surrounding Indian Island in Lower Bay of Sebago Lake.

LD 1500

An Act to Provide Assistance to Low-income Energy Consumers

INDEF PP

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
SAXL M KONTOS	OTP-AM	

LD 1500 proposed to establish a nonlapsing trust fund to finance a statewide low-income electric assistance program using the Maine corporate income taxes derived from the sale of electric utilities' generation-related assets. This bill proposed to allow the Public Utilities Commission to require transmission and distribution utilities to collect funds to augment the trust fund allocation to the extent needed. The bill proposed that the Maine State Housing Authority administer both the trust and the program. The bill proposed to design the program based on the eligibility requirements of Central Maine Power's Electricity Lifeline Program. An advisory board would be established to advise the authority regarding all aspects of the low-income electric assistance program.

Committee Amendment "A" (H-618), which was reported out of the committee during the First Regular Session, proposed to replace most of the bill. This amendment proposed to transfer funds from the General Fund to the Low-income Electric Trust Fund equal to the amount of transfer taxes that were to be deposited in the General Fund as a result of sales or transfers of generation assets required to be divested pursuant to the electric restructuring law; to provide that the electric utility bill payment assistance program funded by the Low-income Electric Trust Fund become active on March 1, 2002; to require that until that date existing utility-administered programs remain in place; and to direct consumer-owned electric utilities to develop and implement programs to provide assistance to low-income consumers between March 1, 2000 and March 1, 2002.

House Amendment "A" (H-692), offered during the First Regular Session, proposed to replace the bill. Under this amendment, that portion of the corporate income taxes collected from electric utilities by the State Tax Assessor attributable to the gain on the sale or transfer of generation assets divested after May 21, 1999 would be required to be paid by the State Tax Assessor to the Maine State Housing Authority for deposit them in the Maine Low-income Energy Assistance Fund. The Maine State Housing Authority would be authorized to apply money in the fund to operate the Maine Low-income Energy Assistance Program to provide weatherization, energy conservation and fuel assistance to persons who qualify for assistance pursuant to the Weatherization Assistance for Low-income Persons Program administered through the United States Department of Energy or the Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program administered through the United States Department of Health and Human Services. The authority would be authorized to use up to 10% of the funds to cover the administrative costs of operating the program. The authority would be required to apply the funds in a manner that maximizes federal assistance under the Weatherization Assistance for Low-income Persons Program and the Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program.

Senate Amendment "A" to Committee Amendment "A" (S-338), offered during the First Regular Session, proposed to amend committee amendment "A" to reduce the amount of funds deposited in the Low-income Electric Consumer Trust Fund. Under this amendment, only taxes attributable to transfers on sales made after May 21, 1999 would be transferred to the fund.

Senate Amendment "A" to House Amendment "A" (S-354), offered during the First Regular Session, proposed to specify that funds in the Maine Low-income Energy Assistance Fund may be used for appliance replacement rather than for fuel assistance.

Committee Amendment "B" (H-891), reported out of the committee during the Second Regular Session, proposed to replace most of the bill. This amendment proposed to provide for an appropriation of \$70,000,000 from the General Fund to the Low-income Electric Consumer Trust Fund, an amount approximately equal to the amount of corporate income taxes and real estate transfer taxes that were deposited in the General Fund as a result of sales or transfers of generation assets required to be divested pursuant to the electric restructuring law; to provide that the low-income program funded by the Low-income Electric Consumer Trust Fund becomes active on March 1, 2002; to require that until that date existing utility-administered programs remain in place; and to direct consumer-owned electric utilities to develop and implement programs to provide assistance to low-income consumers between March 1, 2001 and March 1, 2002.

LD 1810 An Act to Protect the Drinking Water Supply of the Portland Water District ONTP

<u>Sponsor(s)</u> MUSE	<u>Committee Report</u> ONTP	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
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LD 1810 proposed to close the existing boat-launching ramp in Standish and replace it with a new boat-launching ramp, also in Standish, at a location selected by the Portland Water District. The bill proposed that that land and funding for the new boat-launching ramp be provided by the Portland Water District.

LD 2140 An Act to Enhance the Economic Security of Low-income Households with Respect to Utility Service PUBLIC 664

<u>Sponsor(s)</u> DAVIDSON	<u>Committee Report</u> OTP MAJ ONTP MIN	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
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LD 2140 proposed to authorize the Public Utilities Commission to approve discount rates for low-income natural gas customers.

House Amendment "A" (H-920) proposed to permit the Public Utilities Commission to establish a bill payment assistance program for residential low-income customers of natural gas utilities, provided the program was funded by the General Fund.