

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:

Sen. Richard J. Carey, Chair

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

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.

Enacted law summary

Public Law 1999, chapter 664 authorizes the Public Utilities Commission to approve discount rates for low-income natural gas customers who are certified eligible for welfare assistance.

LD 2282 An Act to Clarify the Treatment of Certain Small Consumer-owned Transmission and Distribution Utilities ONTP

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
PINGREE VOLENIK	ONTP	

LD 2282 proposed to direct the Public Utilities Commission, on the request of a small consumer-owned transmission and distribution utility, to exempt the utility from most provisions of Title 35-A. Current law authorizes the commission to grant such exemptions. The Isle au Haut Electric Power Company ("IAH") had filed and failed to obtain resolution of such a request with the commission. The committee, while voting to kill the bill, sent a letter to the commission requesting that the commission move forward on that case.

LD 2288 An Act to Eliminate Regulation of Public Heating Utilities PUBLIC 579

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
DAVIDSON	OTP	

LD 2288 proposed to remove the term "public heating utility" from the definition of "public utility" in the laws governing public utilities, thereby eliminating regulation of these entities by the Public Utilities Commission.

Enacted law summary

Public Law 1999, chapter 579 removes the term "public heating utility" from the definition of "public utility" in the laws governing public utilities, thereby eliminating regulation of these entities by the Public Utilities Commission.

**LD 2289 An Act to Provide Standard-offer Service to Certain Customers PUBLIC 578
EMERGENCY**

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
DAVIDSON	OTP	