

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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*State Of Maine
122nd Legislature*

Second Regular Session

Bill Summaries

*Joint Standing Committee
on
Utilities and Energy*

July 2006

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Maine State Legislature



Office of Policy and Legal Analysis Office of Fiscal and Program Review

122nd Maine Legislature Second Regular Session

Summary of Legislation Before The Joint Standing Committees

Enclosed please find a summary of all bills, resolves, joint study orders, joint resolutions and Constitutional resolutions that were considered by the joint standing 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 committees.

The document is organized for convenient reference to information on bills considered by the committees. It is arranged alphabetically by committee name 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/billsumm.htm).

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
P&S XXX.....	Chapter # of enacted Private & Special Law
PASSED.....	Joint Order passed in both bodies
PUBLIC XXX.....	Chapter # of enacted Public Law
RESOLVE XXX.....	Chapter # of finally passed Resolve
UNSIGNED (Pocket Veto).....	Bill held by Governor
VETO SUSTAINED.....	Legislature failed to override Governor's Veto

Please note that the effective date for all non-emergency legislation enacted in the Second Regular Session (unless otherwise specified in a particular law) is August 23, 2006.

Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy

LD 1440

An Act To Encourage the Implementation of High-speed Internet Access in Rural and Isolated Areas

ONTP

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

LD 1440, which was carried forward from the First Regular Session, was a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208 designed to encourage high-speed Internet access in areas of the State currently not served or underserved because of technical and market barriers. The bill proposed to:

1. Create the Maine Internet Access Authority in the Public Utilities Commission to encourage collaboration between Internet service providers, traditional communications providers, state and local governmental entities and economic and community development groups. The members, powers, duties and goals of the authority would have been set by the Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy;
2. Require towns to better accommodate wireless Internet access from Internet service providers by providing access to water towers or other similarly accessible towers and public buildings for no cost or a greatly reduced fee;
3. Create a State matching fund for implementation of new creative Internet access technologies or for laying messenger wire in communities on current pole structures for Internet access to encourage Internet access in rural communities and competition among Internet service providers in larger communities; and
4. Require all Internet, Voice-over-Internet Protocol and broadband service providers to include all fees in the advertised prices of their products.

The committee addressed issues relating to high-speed Internet access in underserved areas of the State in LD 2080.

LD 1675

An Act To Make a Standard Alternative Form of Regulation Available to Rural Telephone Companies

ONTP

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

LD 1675, which was carried forward from the First Regular Session, proposed to create an exception for rural telephone companies from the law governing the establishment of alternative forms of regulation (AFOR). It proposed to require the Public Utilities Commission to adopt any AFOR proposed by a rural telephone company if it contained certain elements.

The committee, by letter dated January 23, 2006, requested that the Public Utilities Commission form a working group to evaluate options for streamlining the AFOR process for rural telephone companies. The letter requested that the commission report its recommendations on this matter to the committee by January 1, 2007.