

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE
123RD LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR AND FIRST SPECIAL SESSIONS



Summaries of bills, adopted amendments and laws enacted or finally passed
during the Second Regular or First Special Sessions of the 123rd Maine
Legislature coming from the

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON UTILITIES AND
ENERGY**

May 2008

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STATE OF MAINE
123RD LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR & FIRST SPECIAL SESSIONS



**LEGISLATIVE DIGEST OF BILL SUMMARIES AND
ENACTED LAWS**

This *Legislative Digest of Bill Summaries and Enacted Laws* summarizes all bills and adopted amendments and all laws enacted or finally passed during the Second Regular or First Special Sessions of the 123rd Maine Legislature.

The *Digest* is arranged alphabetically by committee, and within each committee by LD number. The committee report(s), prime sponsor and lead co-sponsor(s), if designated, are listed below each bill title. All adopted amendments are summarized and listed by paper number. A subject index is included with each committee. The appendices include a summary of relevant session statistics, an index of all bills by LD number and an index of enacted laws by law type and chapter number.

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>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 IN CONCURRENCE</i>	<i>One body accepts ONTP report; the other indefinitely postpones the bill</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/FINAL PASSAGE</i>	<i>Emergency bill failed to get 2/3 vote</i>
<i>FAILED ENACTMENT/FINAL PASSAGE</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>NOT PROPERLY BEFORE THE BODY</i>	<i>Ruled out of order by the presiding officers; bill died</i>
<i>INDEF PP</i>	<i>Bill Indefinitely Postponed; bill died</i>
<i>ONTP (or Accepted ONTP report)</i>	<i>Ought Not To Pass report accepted; bill died</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>Bill held by Governor</i>
<i>VETO SUSTAINED</i>	<i>Legislature failed to override Governor's Veto</i>

The effective date for non-emergency legislation enacted in the Second Regular Session (R2) is June 30, 2008. The effective date for non-emergency legislation enacted in the First Special Session (S1) is July 18, 2008.¹ The effective date for legislation enacted as an emergency measure is specified in the enacted law summary for those bills. Any bill summarized in this document having an LD number less than 1932 was a bill carried over from the First Regular Session of the 123rd Legislature.

¹ The session in which each law was enacted or finally passed (R2 or S1) is included in Appendix C.

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instead of requiring the commission to develop a plan for statewide distribution for time-of-use meters, requires the commission to develop a proposal for advanced metering infrastructure;

5. Removes the provision in the bill that authorizes the Maine State Housing Authority to issue up to \$5,000,000 in bonds to establish a home energy audit program; and
6. Adds a provision that requires the director of the Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security and the Energy Resources Council to undertake a joint project to examine opportunities for energy conservation through the reuse of waste heat and to develop a plan to reduce peak-load energy consumption in existing and new state government buildings.

Enacted Law Summary

Resolve 2007, chapter 183 directs the Public Utilities Commission to review and make recommendations for changes to the statutes and rules governing net energy billing; to review and make a determination regarding the establishment of statewide standards for interconnection of small renewable generation facilities to the energy grid and, if determined to be appropriate, to proceed to establish those standards; to adopt major substantive rules for shared ownership of renewable energy projects; and to develop proposals for time-of-use rates and for an advanced metering infrastructure program. The resolve requires the Public Utilities Commission to report its findings and recommendations on these issues and submit the required rules for review by the joint standing committee having jurisdiction over utilities and energy matters during the First Regular Session of the 124th Legislature.

The resolve also requires the director of the Governor's Office of Energy Independence and Security and the Energy Resources Council to undertake a joint project to examine opportunities for energy conservation through the reuse of waste heat and to develop a plan to reduce peak-load energy consumption in existing and new state government buildings and submit a report by December 1, 2009.

LD 2180 An Act To Ensure the Integrity of Prepaid Calling Accounts

PUBLIC 511

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
ADAMS	OTP-AM	H-744

This bill provides that the value of a prepaid calling service may not be reduced after that service is purchased. The bill also requires a provider of a prepaid calling service to notify a consumer of the prepaid calling service of an increase in the rate charged for that service before that consumer purchases additional service from that provider by telephone or on the Internet and to notify a consumer of the prepaid calling service if that provider charges different rates for in-state and interstate service.

Committee Amendment "A" (H-744)

This amendment clarifies the provision in the bill that prohibits the reduction in the value of a prepaid calling service after the time of purchase. The amendment specifies that the quantity of prepaid calling service must be determined by the rates, terms and conditions in effect at the time of purchase and that the provider of such service is prohibited from increasing the rate charged for the service purchased until the service is consumed or the service expires in accordance with an expiration date known at the time of purchase.

Enacted Law Summary

Public Law 2007, chapter 411 prohibits a provider of prepaid calling services from increasing the rate charged for the quantity of service that the consumer purchased until the balance of the purchased service is consumed or expires in accordance with an expiration date of which the consumer had notice at the time of purchase. The law specifies that the quantity of prepaid calling service must be determined by the rates, terms and conditions in effect at the time of the purchase. The law also requires a provider of a prepaid calling service to notify a consumer of the prepaid

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calling service of an increase in the rate charged for that service before that consumer purchases additional service from that provider by telephone or on the Internet and to notify a consumer of the prepaid calling service if that provider charges different rates for in-state and interstate service.

**LD 2182 An Act To Allow Civil Penalties for Damaging Utility Property or for Theft
of Utility Services**

**PUBLIC 553
EMERGENCY**

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
BLISS BARTLETT	OTP-AM MAJ ONTP MIN	H-778

This bill establishes a civil penalty of \$2,500 per offense for theft of utility services or for damaging or tampering with utility property. The penalty may be assessed only following a successful civil action by the utility in a court of competent jurisdiction.

Committee Amendment "A" (H-778)

This amendment is the majority report of the committee. The amendment makes the following changes to the bill:

1. It redrafts the statutes governing civil liability for theft of utility services and damages to utility property to remove references to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 17-A, the Maine Criminal Code, and replaces those references with language describing the actions that give rise to the civil liability. This clarifies that liability for damages and the civil penalty in a civil action are not dependent on criminal prosecution;
2. It adds civil liability for wrongfully obtaining utility property;
3. It adds liability for interest on the cost of utility services wrongfully obtained at an annual interest rate of 5%; and
4. It changes the civil penalty amount from a fixed \$2,500 per offense to an amount not to exceed \$2,500, to allow the judge to set the penalty based on the circumstances.

Enacted Law Summary

Public Law 2007, chapter 553 amends the statutes governing civil liability for theft of utility services and damages to utility property to remove references to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 17-A, the Maine Criminal Code, and replaces those references with language describing the actions that give rise to the civil liability. This clarifies that liability for damages and the civil penalty in a civil action are not dependent on criminal prosecution. This law adds civil liability for wrongfully obtaining utility property. It also adds liability for interest on the cost of utility services wrongfully obtained at an annual interest rate of 5%. The law also changes the civil penalty amount from a fixed \$2,500 per offense to an amount not to exceed \$2,500, to allow the judge to set the penalty based on the circumstances.

Public Law 2007, chapter 553 was enacted as an emergency measure effective April 3, 2008.

**LD 2238 An Act Regarding Tort Liability in the Provision of E-9-1-1 Access-only
Service**

PUBLIC 504

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

This bill clarifies that the provision of E-9-1-1 access-only service, also known as "soft dial tone" service, is covered by the law governing the liability of telecommunications providers in the implementation and operation of the