

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the
LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from electronic originals
(may include minor formatting differences from printed original)

STATE OF MAINE
127TH LEGISLATURE
FIRST REGULAR SESSION



Summaries of bills, adopted amendments and laws enacted or finally passed

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, UTILITIES
AND TECHNOLOGY**

August 2015

MEMBERS:

SEN. DAVID WOODSOME, CHAIR
SEN. GARRETT P. MASON
SEN. DAWN HILL

REP. MARK N. DION, CHAIR
REP. ROBERTA B. BEAVERS
REP. CHRISTOPHER W. BABBIDGE
REP. DEANE RYKERSON
REP. JENNIFER L. DECHANT
REP. MARTIN J. GROHMAN
REP. LARRY C. DUNPHY
REP. BETH A. O'CONNOR
REP. NORMAN E. HIGGINS
REP. NATHAN J. WADSWORTH

STAFF:

DIERDRE SCHNEIDER, LEGISLATIVE ANALYST
OFFICE OF POLICY AND LEGAL ANALYSIS
13 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, ME 04333
(207) 287-1670

STATE OF MAINE

127TH LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION



LEGISLATIVE DIGEST OF BILL SUMMARIES AND ENACTED LAWS

This *Legislative Digest of Bill Summaries and Enacted Laws* contains summaries of all LDs and adopted amendments and all laws enacted or finally passed during the First Regular Session of the 127th Maine Legislature.

The *Digest* is arranged alphabetically by committee and within each committee by Legislative Document (LD) number. The committee report(s), prime sponsor and lead co-sponsor(s), if designated, are listed below each LD title. All adopted amendments are summarized and listed by paper number. A subject index is included with each committee. An appendix provides a summary of relevant session statistics.

Final action on each LD is noted to the right of the LD title. The following describes the various final actions.

<i>CARRIED OVER</i>	<i>carried over to a subsequent session of the Legislature</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; legislation died</i>
<i>DIED BETWEEN HOUSES</i>	<i>House & Senate disagreed; legislation died</i>
<i>DIED IN CONCURRENCE</i>	<i>defeated in each house, but on different motions; legislation died</i>
<i>DIED ON ADJOURNMENT</i>	<i>action incomplete when session ended; legislation died</i>
<i>EMERGENCY</i>	<i>enacted law takes effect sooner than 90 days after session adjournment</i>
<i>FAILED, EMERGENCY ENACTMENT or FINAL PASSAGE</i>	<i>emergency failed to receive required 2/3 vote</i>
<i>FAILED, ENACTMENT or FINAL PASSAGE</i>	<i>failed to receive final majority vote</i>
<i>FAILED, MANDATE ENACTMENT</i>	<i>legislation proposing local mandate failed required 2/3 vote</i>
<i>HELD BY GOVERNOR</i>	<i>Governor has not signed; final disposition to be determined at subsequent session</i>
<i>LEAVE TO WITHDRAW</i>	<i>sponsor's request to withdraw legislation granted</i>
<i>NOT PROPERLY BEFORE THE BODY</i>	<i>ruled out of order by the presiding officer; legislation died</i>
<i>INDEF PP</i>	<i>indefinitely postponed; legislation died</i>
<i>ONTP, ACCEPTED, MAJORITY, MINORITY or REPORT X</i>	<i>ought-not-to-pass report accepted; legislation 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>VETO SUSTAINED</i>	<i>Legislature failed to override Governor's veto</i>

The effective date for non-emergency legislation enacted in the First Regular Session of the 127th Legislature is October 15, 2015. The effective date for legislation enacted as an emergency measure may be found in the enacted law summary for that legislation.

Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology

Public Law 2015, chapter 284 does the following:

1. Abolishes the ConnectME Advisory Council;
2. Repeals the existing State broadband policy and replaces it with amended goals and policies;
3. Amends the membership of the ConnectME authority to include two additional entities - the Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development and an individual with significant knowledge of telemedicine appointed by the Governor;
4. Removes the ability of the ConnectME Authority to request staff resources from the Public Utilities Commission or other state agencies with expertise in communications services or advanced communications technology infrastructure;
5. Redefines the duties of the ConnectME Authority;
6. Amends the reporting requirement to the Legislature by requiring that a detailed description of the progress toward the goals and objectives established in the triennial strategic plan be included in the report;
7. Promotes community broadband planning, which directs the ConnectME Authority to fund broadband planning grants to municipalities, groups of municipalities or nonprofit local or regional community organizations to develop plans to expand the availability of broadband in unserved and underserved areas; and
8. Requires the ConnectME Authority to develop a triennial strategic plan by February 15, 2016 for broadband that includes quantifiable measures of performance and that allows for public input.

LD 1073 An Act To Lower Energy Costs and Increase Access to Solar Energy for Agricultural Businesses CARRIED OVER

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
SAVIELLO	ONTP OTP-AM	

This bill establishes the Solar Energy Agricultural Rebate Fund to be used by the Efficiency Maine Trust to provide rebates until December 31, 2017 for solar photovoltaic and solar thermal technologies to agricultural businesses. It provides that an agricultural business that is a customer of an investor-owned transmission and distribution utility must be compensated for accumulated unused kilowatt-hour credits every 12 months. It also authorizes customers of transmission and distribution utilities to elect to be billed using net energy billing.

Committee Amendment "A" (S-253)

The amendment adds an appropriations and allocations section. This amendment was adopted in the Senate and the House before the bill was committed to the committee again.

This bill was carried over to any special or regular session of the 127th Legislature by joint order, H.P. 992.

LD 1075 An Act To Amend the Charter of the Canton Water District CARRIED OVER

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

Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology

This bill amends the Canton Water District charter. It adds language allowing the district to contract out work, changes provisions governing the scheduling of the annual meeting of the board of trustees in order to increase flexibility and changes the provisions regarding compensation of trustees to have the trustees recommend and the municipal officers of the Town of Canton approve compensation amounts. It removes language allowing the trustees to include their annual report in the town report. It changes a quorum at annual and special meetings of the board of trustees from five percent to a majority of those present and narrows voting at those meetings from residents of the district to customers residing in the district. It also establishes readiness-to-serve charges, allows the district to invest in mutual funds and establishes liens for unpaid rates.

This bill was carried over to any special or regular session of the 127th Legislature by joint order, H.P. 992.

LD 1107 An Act To Improve the Laws Governing the Purchasing of Power ONTP

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

This bill requires a competitive electricity provider to offer a 40 percent discount for electricity consumed during off-peak periods.

This bill requires the Public Utilities Commission to establish by rule, a discount rate for residential and small business customers who purchase electricity from resources that qualify as new renewable capacity resources. The discount rate must be at a level that encourages the purchase of new renewable capacity resources.

This bill also requires the Public Utilities Commission to establish a rate design, by rule, for standard-offer services that provides that off-peak pricing is 40 percent lower than pricing for on-peak periods.

Lastly, the bill creates a “Cost of Electricity Study Commission.” The study commission would be comprised of 13 legislators and would be tasked with studying the following:

1. The sources and costs of electricity in the State;
2. How costs in the State compare to those in other states;
3. How the State can lower electricity prices;
4. The level of profits earned by investor-owned transmission and distribution utilities over the last 10 years; and
5. How those profits were used.

This study commission is required to submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations by December 2, 2015.

LD 1116 An Act To Authorize the Development of Thorium Energy ONTP

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