

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE  
129<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATURE  
FIRST SPECIAL AND SECOND REGULAR SESSIONS



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

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

November 2020

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# STATE OF MAINE

129<sup>TH</sup> 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 129<sup>th</sup> 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.

*CARRIED OVER*..... carried over to a subsequent session of the Legislature  
*CON RES XXX*..... chapter # of constitutional resolution passed by both houses  
*CONF CMTE UNABLE TO AGREE*..... Committee of Conference unable to agree; legislation died  
*DIED BETWEEN HOUSES*..... House & Senate disagreed; legislation died  
*DIED IN CONCURRENCE*..... defeated in each house, but on different motions; legislation died  
*DIED ON ADJOURNMENT*..... action incomplete when session ended; legislation died  
*EMERGENCY*..... enacted law takes effect sooner than 90 days after session adjournment  
*FAILED, EMERGENCY ENACTMENT or FINAL PASSAGE*..... emergency failed to receive required 2/3 vote  
*FAILED, ENACTMENT or FINAL PASSAGE*..... failed to receive final majority vote  
*FAILED, MANDATE ENACTMENT*..... legislation proposing local mandate failed required 2/3 vote  
*HELD BY GOVERNOR*..... Governor has not signed; final disposition to be determined at subsequent session  
*LEAVE TO WITHDRAW*..... sponsor's request to withdraw legislation granted  
*NOT PROPERLY BEFORE THE BODY*..... ruled out of order by the presiding officer; legislation died  
*INDEF PP*..... indefinitely postponed; legislation died  
*ONTP, ACCEPTED, MAJORITY, MINORITY or REPORT X*... ought-not-to-pass report accepted; legislation died  
*P&S XXX*..... chapter # of enacted private & special law  
*PUBLIC XXX*..... chapter # of enacted public law  
*RESOLVE XXX*..... chapter # of finally passed resolve  
*VETO SUSTAINED*..... Legislature failed to override Governor's veto

The effective date for non-emergency legislation enacted in the First Regular Session of the 129<sup>th</sup> Legislature is Thursday, September 19, 2019. 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

### Enacted Law Summary

Public Law 2019, chapter 608 delays by one year, from September 30, 2021, to September 30, 2022, the repeal of the requirement that an investor-owned transmission and distribution utility implement an arrearage management program to assist low-income residential customers with their electricity bills and the requirement that the Efficiency Maine Trust work with utilities that participate in an arrearage management program.

#### **LD 2017 An Act To Promote Renewable Energy Resources by Establishing an Energy-to-Gas Pilot Project**

**CARRIED OVER**

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
RILEY T WOODSOME D	OTP-AM ONTP	

This bill requires the Public Utilities Commission to develop and oversee a pilot project for the conversion of excess renewable energy generated from sources such as wind, solar or tidal power into methane gas and the storage of the converted methane gas for future use. It allows up to three energy-to-gas facilities, each up to 10 megawatts in production capacity, to be established under the project. The bill exempts renewable energy transmitted to an energy-to-gas facility from all transmission and distribution charges. The commission is required to establish the pilot project no later than January 1, 2021; the pilot project expires December 31, 2026.

#### **Committee Amendment "A" (H-757)**

This amendment is the majority report of the committee. The amendment replaces the bill. The amendment authorizes the Public Utilities Commission to establish and oversee a power-to-fuel pilot program. The commission may approve up to two power-to-fuel projects between January 1, 2021, and December 31, 2026, each up to 10 megawatts in production capacity, that convert renewable energy to hydrogen gas, methane gas or other fuel. Under the pilot program, sales of renewable energy to a power-to-fuel project are exempt from distribution charges, charges associated with the procurement of energy efficiency resources and renewable portfolio standards requirements for a period of 15 years from the date of project operation. The amendment requires the commission to submit a report on the pilot program by November 1, 2022, to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over energy and utility matters.

This bill was carried over in the House, prior to acceptance of either committee report, to any special session of the 129th Legislature by joint order, S.P. 788.

#### **LD 2021 An Act To Provide Funding for Broadband Internet Infrastructure in Unserved and Underserved Areas**

**CARRIED OVER**

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
HERBIG E RILEY T	OTP-AM ONTP	

This bill appropriates \$15,000,000 from the General Fund to the ConnectME Authority for the provision of broadband Internet infrastructure in unserved and underserved areas.

#### **Committee Amendment "A" (S-414)**

This amendment is the majority report of the committee. The amendment changes the program under the ConnectME Authority that receives the General Fund appropriation in the bill from the Municipal Gigabit Broadband Network Access Fund program to the Office of Broadband Development program.

*Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology*

At adjournment, this amendment had been adopted by the Senate and had not been taken up by the House. This bill was carried over in the House to any special session of the 129th Legislature by joint order, S.P. 788.

**LD 2031 An Act To Require a Cable System Operator To Provide a Pro Rata Credit When Service Is Cancelled by a Subscriber**

**PUBLIC 657**

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
BERRY S LAWRENCE M	OTP-AM ONTP	H-717

This bill requires a cable system operator to grant a subscriber a pro rata credit or rebate if that subscriber requests service disconnection during the first two weeks of a monthly billing period.

**Committee Amendment "A" (H-717)**

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

1. It adds a provision to require a cable system operator to discontinue billing a subscriber within two working days after a request to cancel service, instead of within 10 working days of the request, which is current law.
2. It amends the provision of the bill regarding the pro rata credit or rebate for cancellation of service to require the credit or rebate if a subscriber requests cancellation three or more working days before the end of the monthly billing period.
3. It clarifies the provision in the bill regarding the notice on subscriber bills regarding the right to a pro rata credit or rebate.

**Enacted Law Summary**

Public Law 2019, chapter 657 shortens the time period within which a cable system must discontinue billing a subscriber from within 10 working days of a request to cancel service to within two working days of a request to cancel service. The law also requires a cable system operator to grant a pro rata credit or rebate for cancellation of service if a subscriber requests cancellation three or more working days before the end of the monthly billing period.

**LD 2032 An Act To Reduce Financial Burdens on Small Water Utilities**

**PUBLIC 586  
EMERGENCY**

<u>Sponsor(s)</u>	<u>Committee Report</u>	<u>Amendments Adopted</u>
BERRY S HERBIG E	OTP	

Under current law, a qualified small water utility with gross annual revenues of \$50,000 or less is required to have an independent audit of internal accounts of that water utility performed by a certified public accountant for any year the water utility seeks a rate increase. This bill allows the Public Utilities Commission to waive that independent audit requirement if the water utility shows good cause as to why the requirement should be waived.

**Enacted Law Summary**

Public Law 2019, chapter 586 allows the Public Utilities Commission to waive the requirement that a qualified small water utility with gross annual revenues of \$50,000 or less have an independent audit of internal accounts of