

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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STATE OF MAINE
131ST LEGISLATURE
SECOND REGULAR SESSION



Disposition of bills and summaries of all laws enacted or finally passed

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

June 2024

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STATE OF MAINE

131ST LEGISLATURE
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LEGISLATIVE DIGEST OF BILLS AND SUMMARIES OF ENACTED LAWS

This *Legislative Digest of Bills and Summaries of Enacted Laws* provides the disposition of all LDs and summaries of all laws enacted or finally passed during the Second Regular Session of the 131st Maine Legislature. Please note that all LDs and proposed amendments may be found through the Legislature's webpage, and each includes a summary of what the bill or amendment proposed.

The *Legislative Digest of Bills and Summaries of Enacted Laws* is arranged alphabetically by committee. Within each committee section is a subject index of all LDs considered by that committee as well as a digest of the LDs, arranged by LD number. Also included are enacted law summaries of the LDs enacted or finally passed. Brief analyst notes on certain LDs are also included: a committee digest will indicate if additional notes are provided for an LD. These notes add information staff found useful and may provide useful information to users of this *Digest*; please note that most LDs do not have a note and lack of a note should not be interpreted as having any significance. A separate section of the *Digest* provides a digest of the relatively few LDs that were not referred to a committee or reported from a committee as a committee bill; enacted law summaries of the LDs enacted or finally passed are provided. Finally, an appendix provides a summary of relevant session statistics.

The final disposition of each LD is noted in the relevant summary digest and index. 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 Second Regular Session of the 131st Legislature is Friday, August 9, 2024. The effective date for legislation enacted as an emergency measure may be found in the enacted law summary for that legislation.

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LD 1962 Resolve, to Direct the Public Utilities Commission to Adopt Rules Regarding Utility Shut-offs

ENACTED LAW SUMMARY

Resolve 2023, chapter 145 requires the Public Utilities Commission to adopt rules governing transmission and distribution utility and gas utility terminations and disconnections of service to residential customers for unpaid utility bills. The rules must prohibit the termination or disconnection of electric and gas utility service during extreme weather or temperature conditions, including extreme heat or humidity, between April 16th and November 14th and establish a threshold dollar amount greater than \$50 owed by a customer who does not pay or make a payment arrangement on an undisputed overdue utility bill at or above which the utility may terminate or disconnect utility service. The rules must also prohibit a transmission and distribution utility from charging restoration or reconnection fees or late fees or requiring a security deposit in connection with the restoration of service if the customer is a low-income customer.

LD 1963 An Act Regarding the Future of Renewable Energy Transmission in Northern Maine

ENACTED LAW SUMMARY

Public Law 2023, chapter 660 does the following.

1. It provides that a transmission line or lines developed under the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35-A, section 3210-I, subsection 2 and proposed within the unorganized or deorganized areas of the State are reviewed and permits are issued by the Department of Environmental Protection.
2. It defines an “employer and employee harmony agreement” and provides that the Public Utilities Commission must give preference to proposals for the development and operation of a transmission line or lines or renewable generation projects under Title 35-A, section 3210-I, that maximize federal tax credits by including agreements described in 29 United States Code, Section 158(f) and committing to entering into an employer and employee harmony agreement with a labor organization seeking to represent workers on those projects.
3. In administering the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program, it directs the Public Utilities Commission, in collaboration with the Governor’s Energy Office, to seek to partner with other states, governmental entities or utilities within New England.
4. It provides that the Public Utilities Commission’s request for proposals under Title 35-A, section 3210-I, subsection 2 must be for the development and construction of a transmission line or lines necessary to connect at least 1,200 megawatts of renewable energy resources located in northern Maine, instead of for the development and construction of a 345-kilovolt double circuit generation connection line, or, in the commission’s discretion, a transmission line or lines of greater capacity.

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5. It allows the Public Utilities Commission to consider, under Title 35-A, section 3210-I, proposals for the development and construction of a transmission line or lines and renewable energy generation projects that include mechanisms to mitigate and allocate risks associated with development and operation of those projects.
6. It provides that the bidder that submits a proposal selected by the Public Utilities Commission for the development and construction of a transmission line or lines, upon the issuance by the commission of a certificate of public convenience and necessity, is considered a transmission and distribution utility, except that the commission may limit the rights of the utility to the extent necessary to protect ratepayers from financial risks.
7. It updates dates and terminology within Title 35-A, section 3210-I.
8. It provides that a term sheet awarded by the Public Utilities Commission to a bidder for a project pursuant to the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program must be considered sufficient title, right or interest for a permitting agency to accept and begin processing the application for the project. It also requires the commission, in an order awarding a term sheet to a bidder selected for the development of a transmission line or lines, to provide an explanation of the commission's considerations and findings regarding the costs and benefits associated with the development and construction of the transmission line or lines.
9. It requires the Public Utilities Commission and the Department of Environmental Protection to ensure coordinated public notification and opportunities for public participation, including explanation of all public participation procedures, in connection with regulatory approvals and permitting under Title 35-A and Title 38 for a transmission line or lines and renewable energy generation projects under the Northern Maine Renewable Energy Development Program.
10. It provides that a judicial appeal of final action by the Board of Environmental Protection or the Commissioner of Environmental Protection regarding an application for a transmission line or lines developed pursuant to Title 35-A, section 3210-I, subsection 2, must be taken to the Supreme Judicial Court sitting as the Law Court.
11. It requires the Board of Environmental Protection or the Department of Environmental Protection, as applicable, to hold a hearing in accordance with Title 38, section 486-A, and prohibits the issuance of an order without a hearing in connection with an application for the development and construction of a transmission line or lines.
12. It requires the Department of Environmental Protection to require an applicant for a permit under the site location of development laws for the development and construction of a transmission line or lines to demonstrate to the department that the applicant conducted one or more public meetings regarding the transmission line or lines prior to the submission of its application.