Legislative BULLETIN
MAINE MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION
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Next Year's School Subsidy and New Cost Predictions Online

School and municipal officials are trying to develop their budgets in the midst of extraordinary and unprecedented uncertainty in Augusta with respect to intergovernmental funding. On the school side, the spreadsheet developed by the Department of Education (DOE) to provide a general sense of the school subsidy distribution for the next fiscal year (FY 14) is now available on the Department's website and MMA's as well.

The DOE spreadsheet describes the projected school subsidy distribution as well as the new costs borne by each school system associated with the Governor's state budget proposal. At its core, that proposal provides flat-funding for the general distribution and requires each school system to pay for the employers' share of the so-called "normal costs" of their teachers' Maine State Retirement premium. The employers' "normal cost" premium requires 2.65% of teachers' payroll and represents $29 million worth of new property taxpayer obligations on a statewide level. One-half of that amount, or $14.5 million, is being added to the otherwise flat-funded $895 million in school subsidy distribution to achieve 50%-50% state-local participation, at least as measured on a statewide basis. That cost sharing mechanism does not deliver 50% reimbursement on a school-by-school basis, however, because when a dollar is run through the school subsidy distribution formula, some school systems get a larger proportionate share of that dollar than others, depending largely on their so-called "fiscal capacity". Fiscal capacity is measured by the value of taxable property within the school system that is available for each student.

The inevitable and all-too-human result of releasing a spreadsheet that describes a new distribution of school subsidy is to identify the biggest winners and losers. The last column of the DOE spreadsheet, on the far right hand side, attempts to identify each schools system's "net new costs," which can be used to adjust each school system's year to year increase or decrease in school subsidy, to get to a bottom line impact.

We have endeavored to make those calculations on our own parallel spreadsheet, which is available for review on the website we have set up to provide information about the impacts of the Governor's budget proposals on local government and the property taxpayers who support local government. That

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Emergency Medical Dispatching Quality Assurance - Redefining Mandates

On Tuesday of this week, the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee held public hearings on two bills regarding "quality assurance" programs for E-9-1-1 dispatching protocols. One of the bills seeks to remedy an unfunded state mandate, while the other seeks to fund an expanded public safety quality assurance program.

Addressing an Unfunded Mandate. LD 196, *An Act Regarding the Implementation of the Quality Assurance Program for Public Safety Answering Points*, was graciously sponsored by Rep. Roberta Beavers of South Berwick on behalf of MMA's Legislative Policy Committee. As proposed, LD 196 calls on the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to create a system whereby a third-party vendor is contracted and paid for by the state to implement the legislatively mandated quality assurance program. The bill further directs the PUC to accomplish that goal with funding sources other than assessments on municipalities or public safety answering points.

The bill would effectively remedy an unfunded state mandate passed along to the state's property taxpayers in 2010 when the Legislature directed the Emergency Services Communication Bureau, a division of the PUC, to create a quality assurance program for the purpose of monitoring, reviewing, and evaluating the handling of emergency medical calls to the E-9-1-1 system by dispatchers in the state's 26 Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs).

As a result of that legislative directive, professionally trained quality assurance experts in each of Maine's PSAPs are mandated to review at least 100 randomly selected calls each month, rank the calls according to a set of standards, and design training programs to improve the services provided by frontline dispatchers. The mandate that implemented the quality assurance system did not identify a state-level funding source, so the costs of providing the time-intensive quality assurance

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function are borne by municipalities and counties to the tune of nearly $500,000 each year. LD 196 would cause those expenditures to be funded with state-level resources.

Expanding the System with Funding. The second bill, LD 275, *Resolve, to Require the Emergency Services Communication Bureau to Expand the Existing Quality Assurance System*, was sponsored by Sen. Tom Saviello of Franklin County. The bill directs the PUC to expand the existing medically-related call quality assurance system to the police and fire calls received by PSAPs and local dispatch systems. The bill, however, authorizes expenditures of state E-9-1-1 funds to cover the cost of expanding the program.

MMA President and Farmington Chair of the Select Board Stephan Bunker was on hand to deliver testimony in support of LD 196 and LD 275.

Speaking from the perspective of a municipal officer, as well as a former employee of the Maine Department of Public Safety, Mr. Bunker provided first-hand experience of how this public safety system evolved and the unanticipated consequences that resulted in shifting funding burdens onto the property taxpayers. Although Mr. Bunker believes that the existing quality assurance program is yielding positive results, and should be expanded to include detailed assessments of police and fire dispatch calls as well emergency medial assistance calls, he strongly urged the Legislature to find the revenue necessary to properly fund both the existing and expanded programs.

Various public safety officials came to the public hearing to testify in support, opposition and "neither for nor against" both LD 196 and LD 275. Despite the varying positions, the message was consistent and uniform. Municipal and county emergency medical, fire and police officials focused on the importance of the quality assurance program as a necessary tool for assessing and providing the best possible emergency response service. However, they all noted the growing burdens, both with respect to costs and human resources, associated with the local implementation of the program.

The public safety officials at the hearing expressed an interest in shifting the emergency call assessment, ranking and reporting functions to a third-party vendor in order to promote consistency, uniformity and quality throughout the state. In addition, the public safety community believes that the use of a third-party call evaluator would enable dispatcher supervisors to focus local resources on training and supporting frontline staff.

The Public Utilities Commission (PUC) testified "neither for nor against" both LD 196 and LD 275. With the respect to LD196, the PUC's testimony was informative in nature and focused on the history, process, and costs associated with the PSAP-level implementation of the quality assurance program.

In its testimony (and as a potential alternative to LD 275), the PUC referred to upcoming legislation that was being advanced on the Commission's behalf by Sen. John Cleveland of Androscoggin County and Rep. Barry Hobbins of Saco, the chairs of the Committee. The bill, LD 774, *Resolve, Regarding a Fire and Police Protocols Pilot Program for E-9-1-1 Call Processing*, would direct the PUC to conduct a pilot program to examine the benefits, costs and resources needed to expand the existing quality assurance program to include reviews of fire and police calls.

A representative of the Telecommunications Association of Maine (TAM) also provided testimony on the two quality assurance bills. TAM asked the Committee to avoid the temptation of using the existing funds or expanding the $0.45 monthly surcharge on cell phone service as a source of revenue for funding the state's quality assurance programs. The members of TAM believe that those surcharge funds are more appropriately used to fund improvements to the telecommunications system.

The response from the Committee to LD 196 and LD 275 was mixed. Some members expressed interest in all aspects of the program, including delivery, impact and funding. Although all members appeared generally supportive of the quality assurance program, a few challenged the notion that the requirement to locally administer and fund the program was an unfunded state mandate.

Throughout the course of the public hearings, three "not an unfunded mandate" theories were offered.

Good Policy Theory. One member of the Commitee suggested that since the quality assurance program is universally supported by the public safety community, the towns, cities and counties would fund the program whether or not it was mandated by state law, therefore a mandate does not exist.

Minimal Cost Theory. One member theorized that when taking into consideration that 500 communities share the nearly $500,000 program, the $1,000/municipality share could be easily absorbed in local budgets, therefore no mandate.

Local Benefit Yields Local Cost Theory. And finally, one member opined that since the provision of public safety dispatching benefits a region, it is most appropriate for the region and not the state to fund the service, therefore no mandate.

Municipal officials respectfully disagree.

As provided in Article IX, Section 21 of Maine's Constitution, a mandate is defined as an expansion or modification of a local government's activities that necessitates additional expenditures from local resources. Municipal officials strongly adhere to the fact that the existing medically-based and proposed expanded police and fire based quality assurance programs meet the definition of a mandate, and for this reason call on the Legislature to fund 90% of those annual expenditures as mandated by the Constitution.

The work sessions on LD 196 and LD 275 have not yet been scheduled.

Legislative Bulletin

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Editorial Staff: Geoffrey Herman, Kate Dufour and Laura Veilleux of the State & Federal Relations staff.

School Subsidy (cont'd)

website address is www.memun.org/MaineTaxShift .

The "net new costs" issue. Our spreadsheet uses the information in the DOE spreadsheet, but deviates in the way it packages that information in one important way. On the DOE spreadsheet, two "new local costs" are packaged together in a way that might confuse the impact analysis.

Column 12 of the DOE spreadsheet identifies the value in each school system of a school construction debt service payment from the previous year that no longer has to be made because the debt is retired. In the next column the DOE spreadsheet identifies each school system's new financial exposure to the Teachers' Retirement premium as a "new cost". The next column over, with the title "net new costs", then subtracts the retired debt service payment from the new Teacher Retirement obligation as though extinguishing a debt payment paid by the state somehow offsets the new Teacher Retirement premium obligation to be paid with property tax dollars. The fact that the General Purpose Aid to Education funds (GPA) are no longer being sent to the school because the school doesn't have to use the GPA dollars to meet a debt payment in no way offsets the impact of picking up a new obligation to pay the Maine State Retirement System 2.65% of teachers' payroll. The two issues do not intersect in a way that allows one to offset the other.

As a result, our method of determining the impacts of the Governor's budget proposals on the school systems proceeds as follows:

1) Start with the year-to-year change in the amount of school subsidy, from the current fiscal year (FY 13) to the next (FY 14), as projected.
2) Adjust the year-to-year change in the amount of subsidy by the value of the extinguished debt service payment (*Example: The Biddeford school system is shown as receiving $141,390 less in school subsidy in FY 14 but $92,133 worth of that reduction is associated with no longer receiving that amount of subsidy to pay off a school construction debt. Therefore, the real year-to-year reduction in school subsidy for all general program budgeting purposes, is $49,257.)*
3) After making that adjustment, adjust the year-to-year change in school subsidy for all school systems by the new obligation to pay the Teacher Retirement premium, which is the true "new cost". If the school system will experience an increase in school subsidy, the value of the Retirement premium is subtracted from that increase. If the school system is experiencing a decrease in school subsidy, the value of the Retirement premium is added to that decrease.
4) For the purposes of determining relative impact, divide the result, identified as "GPA change adjusted by new costs", by the school's 100% EPS allocation to determine the positive or negative impact by percentage.

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Chart #1
General Purpose Aid for Local Schools
Preliminary FY 14
Estimate

	A EPS Total Allocation at 100%	B Change in School Subsidy FY 13 to FY 14 Gain or (Loss)	C Change Debt Service FY 13 to FY 14 Gain or (Loss)	D Teacher Retirement Cost	E Operational GPA Gain or (Loss) Change in Column B - C	F GPA Impact Plus Retirement Impact Column E - D	G GPA Impact Plus Retirement Impact as % EPS Allocation
RSU 45/MSAD 45	$3,514,299.14	$215,331.40	$0.00	$50,199.29	$215,331.40	$165,132.11	4.7%
RSU 32/MSAD 32	$3,956,892.15	$228,606.19	$2,529.24	$48,380.50	$226,076.95	$177,696.45	4.5%
Yarmouth	$14,569,483.59	$884,921.56	$0.00	$265,349.80	$884,921.56	$619,571.76	4.3%
South Portland	$34,117,801.03	$1,840,059.21	$0.00	$550,606.38	$1,840,059.21	$1,289,452.83	3.8%
Lewiston	$58,306,423.37	$2,361,031.61	($158,385.56)	$696,807.45	$2,519,417.17	$1,822,609.72	3.1%
Augusta	$26,030,566.60	$1,075,637.93	($50,571.25)	$360,877.85	$1,126,209.18	$765,331.33	2.9%

Chart #2
General Purpose Aid for Local Schools
Preliminary FY 14

Estimate

	A EPS Total Allocation at 100%	B Change in School Subsidy FY 13 to FY 14 Gain or (Loss)	C Change Debt Service FY 13 to FY 14 Gain or (Loss)	D Teacher Retirement Cost	E Operational GPA Gain or (Loss) Change in Column B - C	F GPA Impact Plus Retirement Impact Column E - D	G GPA Impact Plus Retirement Impact as % EPS Allocation
RSU 38	$11,339,948.63	($414,094.80)	($20,666.62)	$206,870.49	($393,428.18)	($600,298.67)	-5.3%
Machias	$2,852,061.91	($64,612.12)	$0.00	$60,915.33	($64,612.12)	($125,527.45)	-4.4%
Scarborough	$33,079,473.04	($951,139.40)	($26,707.50)	$517,218.86	($924,431.90)	($1,441,650.76)	-4.4%
Mt Desert CSD	$4,319,907.99	($78,398.19)	$0.00	$109,046.22	($78,398.19)	($187,444.41)	-4.3%
Sanford	$31,274,178.04	($846,582.51)	$0.00	$497,706.70	($846,582.51)	($1,344,289.21)	-4.3%
Easton	$2,041,682.12	($44,818.48)	$0.00	$39,703.93	($44,818.48)	($84,522.41)	-4.1%

School Subsidy *(cont'd)*

In an effort to try to get a sense of the public policy in play, we intended to list the top 10 "winners and losers" on the basis of the positive or negative budget impact as a percentage of the school's EPS allocation. For that purpose, we only picked school systems that have a 100% EPS allocation of $2 million or more. This is not to make light of the impacts on the smaller schools systems. It is just because the inputs at the small school system level (including year to year change in valuation, changes in student count, sharp changes in special education obligations, etc.) can be so volatile, it is hard to get a sense of funding system's public policy direction in any top 10 analysis without treating the smaller school systems as outliers.

Chart #1on page 3 identifies a sampling among the top 10 "winners" with respect to projected school subsidy distribution as a percentage of the school system's total EPS allocation. Those school systems include SAD 45 (Washburn area), SAD 32 (Ashland area), Yarmouth, South Portland, Lewiston and Augusta. On the basis of the data provided in the DOE spreadsheet, the causative factors for the increased subsidy appear to be either an increase in student count (Augusta, Lewiston, SADs 32, 45), a decrease in taxable value relative to the state average (South Portland), or both (Yarmouth). Other factors not visible on the spreadsheet are apparently driving the increases for a couple of these school systems. For example, we are told that Augusta's increase is also driven by a structural change in how that school system will receive funds for students in the outlying communities who attend Augusta's career and technical education programs.

Chart #2 on page 3 identifies a sampling among the top 10 "losers" with respect to projected school subsidy as a percentage of that school system's total EPS allocation. Those school systems include RSU 38 (Readfield area), Machias, Scarborough, the Mt. Desert CSD, Sanford, and Easton. The principal factors driving the negative numbers appear to be reduction in student count, sometimes coupled with increased value, which creates a double whammy. As was the case with the "winners", though, there must also be other factors at play in some cases because the sharp negatives for some systems don't seem to be clearly influenced by either the student count or valuation data.

As indicated above, the official DOE spreadsheet is located on our website, as is the spreadsheet we created, using the DOE data, to capture the school subsidy projection impact for each school as a percentage of that school's total EPS allocation. Jim Rier at the Department of Education cautions that at this stage in the process there are always data issues and other specific situations within any school district that cause this information to change between now and when the actual subsidy distribution determinations are calculated, which is not to mention action sof the Legislature

Volunteer Firefighters and "Tone to Tone" Workers' Compensation Coverage

Last week's Legislative Bulletin included an article about the February 20th public hearing on LD 235, *An Act to Improve Insurance Coverage for Volunteer First Responders.* In summary, that bill would create automatic Workers' Compensation eligibility whenever a volunteer firefighter or emergency medical services (EMS) volunteer sustains an injury after receiving notification of an emergency and is in the process of responding.

Since these municipal employees are already eligible for Compensation in response to an emergency after entering onto the traveled way, there is no argument that the primary focus of the bill is on injuries that these municipal personnel might receive in their own home or on their own property after they receive the electronic notification of an emergency. The way Workers' Compensation is designed, volunteer firefighters along with virtually all other employees in the state, are generally ineligible for Compensation for injuries sustained in their own home or on their own property when preparing to go to the actual workplace. That is only a general rule. The Workers' Compensation analysis is flexible enough so that the general rule is not cast in stone, such as when the employer's own policies or practices essentially make the employee's home (or driveway or garage) the workplace.

The volunteer firefighters claim they are different from all other employees, even other non-volunteer emergency public safety personnel, and they want Workers' Compensation law to be amended to fill what they describe as a "gap" in their Workers' Compensation coverage. Their claim is that providing this coverage will improve the municipal ability to recruit and retain of these types of volunteers.

MMA's 70 member Legislative Policy Committee voted to oppose LD 235, and MMA's testimony, along with that of the Executive Director of the Workers' Compensation Board and various insurers, was that:

- the "gap" from the perspective of the volunteer firefighters is the same "gap" that is experienced by all employees, and for good reason;
- no employer, including municipalities, should become liable for injuries sustained in an employee's private home where the employer has zero control of the workplace;
- there are products available in the insurance marketplace to fill or partially fill the so-called "gap", one of which was created by MMA specifically for volunteer firefighters;
- the recruitment and retention issue can be addressed by the individual municipal employers through regular compensation adjustments or locally-provided alternative benefits and should not be provided by twisting Compensation law into something it shouldn't be; and
- if filling the so-called "gap" is the

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appropriate public policy, there is no rational basis for not filling it for all public safety personnel (or all personnel in both the public and private sector) that get called out in emergency circumstances to help potential victims in an emergency.

On Wednesday this week the Labor, Commerce, Research and Economic Development Committee held a work session on the bill. By the nature of the questions asked and general statements made about the bill by Committee members, it seems fair to predict that at least some members of the Committee are poised to reframe the bill as a "rebuttable presumption" for Workers' Compensation rather than an outright entitlement.

Instead of moving forward with the bill as printed, at least a few Committee members supporting the bill will be suggesting an amendment that would write into Workers' Compensation law a "rebuttable presumption."

At the public hearing on the bill, the supporters of LD 235 established that somewhere around 10,000 volunteer firefighters and EMS volunteers are currently active in the state. Therefore the new version of LD 235 that appears to be in the offing would provide that if any of these 10,000 volunteers get injured after being called to an emergency but while still inside their home or in the yard or driveway, Maine law will presume the injury was incurred because of the call, and they will be eligible for Workers' Compensation. It will be up to the municipality to prove otherwise.

Several interesting facts and non-facts were laid out at the work session.

Other states. A fact sheet was distributed to the Committee by the Office of Policy and Legal Analysis that stated at least six other states provide this so-called "tone to tone" coverage: Iowa, Ohio, Nebraska, Maryland, Vermont and Washington. That same fact sheet contained information about the Workers' Compensation program in all 50 states that directly refuted that information because the Compensation program in Nebraska, Maryland, Vermont and Washington expressly provide Compensation only when the injury occurs in the line of duty and/or in the line of duty and "en route" to the emergency. According to the Executive Director of the Workers' Compensation Board, his research suggests that no other state provides "tone to tone" coverage as that coverage would be provided in LD 235.

Volunteer compensation. Representative Jim Campbell (Newfield), a strong supporter of the printed bill, said that volunteer firefighters and EMS volunteers deserve this special Workers' Compensation coverage because they work for free, receiving no remunerative compensation whatsoever. That is also incorrect. According the data assembled by MMA in its annual Municipal Salary Survey, Of the 160 municipalities reporting the payroll data for their firefighters, not a single municipality reported that their volunteers were not provided some level of pay. No one is getting rich at the job, to be sure, but in all those municipalities surveyed, the volunteer firefighters were either receiving a yearly stipend, payment based on some kind of "point system", or an hourly rate, typically in the $10 per hour range. Half of the respondent municipalities are small towns with populations under 2,000.

Who should this new policy cover? Several Committee members, none as straightforwardly as Senator John Cleveland (Androscoggin Cty.), asked who this new policy should cover. If it is to cover municipal first responders, why not State level first responders? If it is to cover public sector employees who are called out to dangerous situations, why not private sector employees who have similar responsibilities? Should the policy cover call firefighters as well as volunteers? Should the policy cover volunteer firefighters who do not report to the actual emergency but report, instead, to the station house as back-up personnel? The Committee members most conspicuously supporting LD 235 in either its printed form or as converted to a "rebuttable presumption", articulated two responses. Rep. Campbell said that it need only cover volunteer firefighters because they receive no pay. As a variant, Rep. Andrew Mason (Topsham) said that volunteers do not necessarily have the types of health insurance or accident coverage that full time, professional public safety personnel might have, therefore they deserve this back-up accident protection as a class of employees.

"In the process of responding". Representative Amy Volk (Gorham) wanted to know how it could be substantiated or independently verified that an injury sustained in or within the immediate grounds of the private home actually occurred "in the process of responding to the emergency" rather than in the process of doing something else. If somewhere around 10,000 volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel are suddenly going to be presumptively eligible for Workers' Compensation for any injury sustained on their private property after being "toned" to an emergency, and it will be the municipality that has to prove that the injury was not sustained because of the emergency call, how is the municipality going to be able to establish that the employee was, in fact, responding to the emergency? According to Rep. Mason, whether or not the employee was actually responding to the emergency is already part of the fact finding process. Under the "rebuttable presumption" concept, all that would happen is that the municipality would have to show that the employee was, in fact, in the process of responding. The employee would not have that burden. How the municipality would make that demonstration except on the employee's own testimony is unclear.

Control of the "workplace." In response to the observation by Senator Cleveland that Workers' Compensation liability should not be placed on an employer for injuries sustained in the private home, where the employer exerts no control over the environment, Rep. Mason countered that the employer similarly exerts no control over the environment of the actual emergency site, which is also not in a prescribed or controlled environment. The difference, however, is that at the emergency scene the employer is physically present, and policies and protocols can be made to apply. Even on the traveled way to the scene, there are traffic standards that have to be complied with and the accidents that may unfortunately occur take place in the public domain.

The Committee is still in the process of taking in information regarding LD 235. MMA will report further developments on the bill. Municipal officials who may be concerned about opening up Workers' Compensation liability for home-based injuries sustained by volunteer personnel should express those concerns to their legislators.

Bill Seeks to Improve Tree Growth Reimbursement Formula

Maine Forest Products Council Opposes Any Increases to Reimbursement

The rural and heavily forested towns in Maine will appreciate the efforts of Cyr Plantation, which is trying to get the Tree Growth reimbursement formula amended in a responsible way so that towns don't get effectively punished, reimbursement-wise, when they appropriately update their assessing schedules.

LD 492, *An Act to Increase Reimbursement to Municipalities under the Maine Tree Growth Tax Law,* was presented to the Taxation Committee on Monday this week by its sponsor, Sen. Troy Jackson (Aroostook Cty.). The bill was presented as "concept draft" legislation, which means that the specific language of the bill was not available in written form, just the concept of "*increasing reimbursement to municipalities for property tax losses resulting from Tree Growth enrollments*." In this case, the concept draft bill was a placeholder.

MMA had worked with Cyr Plantation on developing the specific language of the bill that Sen. Jackson's concept draft was meant to be. For that reason, MMA's Legislative Policy Committee had a chance in late January to review the draft legislation and unanimously endorsed it.

As currently calculated, a town's so-called "90%" Tree Growth reimbursement is calculated on the basis of the difference between the value of each Tree Growth acre as required by law (which in Aroostook County hovers around $120 per acre depending on species) and either the "undeveloped acreage rate" used by the municipality to determine the value of raw land or the countywide average "undeveloped acreage rate", whichever is less. The use of whichever undeveloped acreage rate is lower is one reason why the so-called "90%" reimbursement doesn't actually provide 90% reimbursement, at least for some municipalities. The other major reason why the "90%" reimbursement offers far less than the statutory promise implies is because land in the Tree Growth program on waterfront acreage is more valuable than the town's "undeveloped acreage rate" by at least two orders of magnitude. Waterfront land on the coast or on the shore of lakes and ponds is not sold in the marketplace at a few hundred dollars an acre.

In any event, LD 492 would change the "whichever is less" element of the Tree Growth reimbursement formula to require the use of the town's actual undeveloped acreage rate unless the State Tax Assessor finds that the appropriate sales data in the region does not support the town's rate. In that case, the countywide average undeveloped acreage rate would be used. The purpose of the bill is to avoid discouraging a town from upgrading its assessing schedule according to actual sales data. Town assessors should be rewarded and not punished for keeping their assessing schedules accurate.

The surprise at the hearing was the strong oppositional testimony from Maine's large-acreage forest landowners. As the only opponent to LD 492, the Maine Forest Products Council, relied on passages from a report of several years ago and urged the Committee to reject LD 492 because: (1) the towns are already receiving "90%" reimbursement; (2) Tree Growth enrollments do not actually result in any property tax losses; and (3) forested land doesn't actually cost the municipalities anything in the way of services. According to the Council, the Tree Growth program is working very well for the municipalities and the towns neither need nor deserve any increases in Tree Growth reimbursement. It is certainly the case that the Maine Forest Products Council had not seen the actual language of LD 492 before the organization took this aggressive position on the bill, but it remains unclear why the large forest landowners should be so vocally opposed to even the concept of improving municipal reimbursement. One would think they would be supportive of making rural, heavily forested communities more comfortable with the program, but apparently not.

The Committee's work session on LD 492 is being held this afternoon, Friday, March 1.

Budget Forum Schedule – February 23 to March 16

In preparation for the upcoming debates on Governor LePage's proposed FY 14 – FY 15 General Fund budget, state and local decision makers, as well as members of the general public, are gathering to discuss how these proposals will impact municipalities, property taxpayers and residents. What follows is a schedule of the meetings that will be held in the next two weeks. Municipal officials are encouraged to attend these important public forums.

Date	Host	Location	Time
March 4	Penobscot River Educational Partnership	Hampden Academy Performing Arts Center	7:00 – 8:30 p.m.
March 6	Sen. John Cleveland	New Gloucester Town Meeting House	6:30 – 8:00 p.m.
March 6	Sen. Chris Johnson	Windsor Town Hall	6:00 p.m.
March 7	Penebscot Region Town /City Managers and Legislators	Brewer Auditorium, 318 Wilson St.	6:30 p.m.
March 16	Sen. John Tuttle	Waterboro Town Hall	10:00 a.m. – noon

LEGISLATIVE HEARINGS

Monday, March 4

Criminal Justice & Public Safety
Rm. 436, State House, 10:00 a.m.
Tel: 287-1122

LD 122 – An Act To Provide Assistance to Municipalities Recovering from a Municipally Significant Disaster.

LD 326 – An Act To Update the Maine Emergency Management Laws.

Education & Cultural Affairs
Room 202, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.
Tel: 287-3125

LD 462 – An Act To Dedicate Funds for Emergency Back-up Power for Schools.

State & Local Government
Room 214, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.
Tel: 287-1330

LD 559 – An Act To Change Document Filing Fees for County Registries of Deeds.

Veterans & Legal Affairs
Room 437, State House, 10:00 a.m.
Tel: 287-1310

LD 508 – An Act To Remove the Disqualification of Full-time Law Enforcement Officers from Obtaining a Liquor License.

1:00 p.m.

LD 573 – Resolution, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Restrict the Voting Privileges of Persons Incarcerated for Murder or Class A Crimes.

Tuesday, March 5

Energy, Utilities & Technology
Room 211, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.
Tel: 287-4143

LD 175 – An Act To Update the Laws Governing Energy Efficiency Building Performance Standards.

Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
Room 206, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.
Tel: 287-1338

LD 100 – An Act To Allow Municipalities To Stock Ponds.

Judiciary
Room 438, State House, 1:00 p.m.

Tel: 287-1327

LD 64 – An Act To Place Land in Centerville in Trust for the Passamaquoddy Tribe.

LD 165 – An Act To Prohibit the Use of Eminent Domain in Certain Public-Private Partnerships.

LD 220 – An Act To Ban the United Nations Agenda 21 in Maine.

LD 311 – An Act To Protect Landowners from the Exercise of Eminent Domain in Energy Infrastructure Corridors.

Transportation
Room 126, State House, 1:00 p.m.
Tel: 287-4148

LD 327 – An Act To Allow Media Motor Vehicles To Be Equipped with Amber Auxiliary Lights.

LD 472 – An Act To Allow Properly Lifted Vehicles To Operate.

Wednesday, March 6

Environment & Natural Resources
Room 216, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.
Tel: 287-4149

LD 432 – An Act To Amend the Gifting of Land Exemption under the Subdivision Laws.

Transportation
Room 126, State House, 1:00 p.m.
Tel: 287-4148

LD 406 – An Act To Require Antique Automobiles That Are Operated on the Highways To Be Inspected.

LD 570 – An Act To Create a Vintage Car Category in the Motor Vehicle Laws.

Thursday, March 7

Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry
Room 206, Cross State Office Building, 1:45 p.m.
Tel: 287-1312

LD 292 – An Act To Protect the Public Health from Mosquito-borne Diseases.

Education & Cultural Affairs
Room 202, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.
Tel: 287-3125

LD 485 – An Act To Amend and Clarify Certain Education Laws.

Health & Human Services
Room 209, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.
Tel: 287-1317

LD 256 – An Act To Amend the Laws Governing Recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.

Inland Fisheries & Wildlife
Room 206, Cross State Office Building, 1:00 p.m.
Tel: 287-1338

LD 89 – An Act To Establish a Deadline for Snowmobile Registration.

LD 97 – An Act To Improve the Integrity of the State's Snowmobile Trail System.

LD 268 – An Act To Improve Snowmobiling in the State.

Friday, March 8

Criminal Justice & Public Safety
Rm. 436, State House, 10:00 a.m.
Tel: 287-1122

LD 381 – An Act To Allow a Court To Order a Person Who Violates a Municipal Ordinance To Perform Community Service Work.

LD 498 – An Act To Allow a Municipality To Prohibit a Sex Offender from Residing within 750 Feet of a Recreational Facility.

LD 526 – An Act To Allow for the Disposition of Certain Items Confiscated from Criminals Convicted of Sexual Exploitation of Minors.

Transportation
Room 126, State House, 9:00 a.m.
Tel: 287-4148

LD 446 – Resolve, Directing the Department of Transportation To Develop a Less Corrosive Road Deicing Strategy.

LD 483 – An Act To Promote Small Businesses by Enhancing the Use of On-premises Signs.

LD 568 – Resolve, To Name Bridge Number 2975 in Kenduskeag the Kenduskeag Veterans Bridge.

IN THE HOPPER

(The bill summaries are written by MMA staff and are not necessarily the bill's summary statement or an excerpt from that summary statement. During the course of the legislative session, many more bills of municipal interest will be printed than there is space in the *Legislative Bulletin* to describe. Our attempt is to provide a description of what would appear to be the bills of most significance to local government, but we would advise municipal officials to also review the comprehensive list of LDs of municipal interest that can be found on MMA's website, www.memun.org.)

Appropriations & Financial Affairs

LD 713 – An Act To Return Local Revenue Sharing to Full Funding. (Emergency) (Sponsored by Sen. Katz of Kennebec Cty; additional cosponsors.)

This bill creates a three year ramp to return to full municipal revenue sharing distribution of 5% of state sales and income taxes by July 1, 2015 for Fiscal Year 2016. For the upcoming fiscal year (FY 14) the distribution would be 3.5% of sales and income tax revenue. For the subsequent fiscal year (FY 15), the distribution would be 4% of those state revenues, and the full 5% distribution would begin on July 1, 2015. The bill does not change current law with respect to the distributions of the "Rev I" and "Rev II" revenue sharing.

Health & Human Services

LD 678 – An Act To Allow Random Drug Testing for Recipients of Certain Public Benefits. (Sponsored by Rep. Beaudoin of Biddeford; additional cosponsors.)

This bill authorizes a municipality, in the case of General Assistance (GA) applicants, and the Department of Health and Human Services, in the case of state-administered public assistance programs, to require applicants to undergo random drug tests and suspend eligibility for benefits for those applicants who test positive until they test negative on a subsequent application. The procedures for administering the testing program must be established in the municipality's GA ordinance.

Labor, Commerce, Research & Economic Development

LD 700 – An Act To Require Elevators To Be Accessible for Ambulance Stretchers. (Sponsored by Sen. Tuttle of York Cty.)

This bill requires by January 1, 2018 all multistory structures meeting the definition of places of public accommodation, including all public buildings, to have elevators that access all floors in the building and are of sufficient size to accommodate a person being transported on a stretcher in a fully supine position.

State & Local Government

LD 586 – An Act To Enable Municipalities To Establish Business Development Loan Programs Using Municipally Raised or Appropriated Money. (Sponsored by Rep. Johnson of Greenville.)

This bill authorizes municipalities to raise and appropriate money to establish revolving loan fund programs to assist local for-profit and nonprofit enterprises in their job creation and retention efforts.