

Highlighted bills

LD	Committee	Title of Bill	MFPC Position	Status	COMMENTS
1561	Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry	An Act To Amend the Maine Land Use Planning Commission Laws and Enhance the Economic Vitality of Neighboring Communities	Oppose	Dead	Major bill by NRCM defeated along with less aggressive LD 568. Investment in thorough process by LUPC staff and buy-in by Maine Municipal Association and others prevailed. Testament to building strong resilient, policy in a transparent process.
1691	Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry	An Act To Ban Use of Aerial Herbicide Spraying for the Purpose of Deforestation	Oppose	Signed by governor	Amendment for Board of Pesticide Control (BPC) to audit current spray season and report back to the ACF Committee next session. This bill was a major threat despite having only one proponent. Senate President Troy Jackson authored the bill and ultimately agreed to a change to a resolve. Landowners will be working with the BPC to comply with the review of the 2019 spray season.
912	Energy, Utilities and Technology	An Act To Establish the Wood Energy Investment Program	Support	Carried over	This bill establishes the Wood Energy Investment Fund and creates the Wood Energy Investment Program within the Efficiency Maine Trust. Need to verify, but believe funds from the PUC account were swept into the new budget. Recalled from Governor's desk.
1433	Environment and Natural Resources	An Act To Protect the Environment and Public Health by Further Reducing Toxic Chemicals in Packaging	Oppose	Public law	Despite early efforts with the Administration to hold this bill over into next session and allow the PFAS Task Force to work on issues, sponsors elected to move bill forward. Manufacturing effects are delayed and rulemaking on PFAS rules are major substantive, but national focus is driving action. A concerning trend evidenced in this issue, but also seen in the herbicide and inoculation debates is societies trend towards a distrust of science-based decision making involving an understanding of statistical risk. In forestry we are dependent on science-based approaches to policy and will need to be diligent in this effort.
1109	Inland Fisheries & Wildlife	An Act Regarding the Size and Weight of All-terrain Vehicles, the Operation of Motor Vehicles on Designated All-terrain Vehicle Trails and the Operation of All-terrain Vehicles on Trails Posted with Size or Weight Limits	Monitor	Public law	Amends the definition of "ATV" to limit that definition to a motor-driven, off road, recreational vehicle that was designed by the manufacturer for and is capable of cross-country travel. It preserves that portion of the bill that amends the definition of "ATV" to exclude a motor vehicle as defined in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 29-A, 7 section 101, subsection 42. Discussions about several ATV bills led to the governor creating an ATV task force that looks at statewide trail use and equipment design in a comprehensive approach. This form of recreation is growing dramatically as well as the problems for landowners associated with safety, and environmental degradation. The activities of this council will be important in managing serious concerns raised by the landowner community.

1653	Judiciary	Resolve, Establishing the Conference To Address and Improve Relations between Maine Indian Tribes and the Legislature		Carried Over	This bill never had a hearing and it is anticipated to be a topic discussed by the Governor's Tribal Council. The administration is dedicated to improving the relationship with the tribes in Maine. This is an important endeavor, but it will be a challenge to revisit aspects of the original land claims settlement that was negotiated in 1980. Kevin Hancock and John Cashwell have been named to this commission and will be able to provide some valuable perspective.
1709	Judiciary	An Act To Amend the Act To Implement the Maine Indian Claims Settlement	Monitor	Carried Over	This bill never had a hearing and it is anticipated to be a topic discussed by the Governor's Tribal Council.
756	Labor and Housing	WORKERS COMP	Support	Public law	Despite an onslaught of bills focused on workers compensation reform, the governor worked with both parties to arrive at a compromise bill taking into account perspective from both the business community and the labor representatives. Sen. Stacy Guerin maintained a strong bargaining position and deserves credit for her diligence.
1459	Labor and Housing	An Act To Expand Application of the Maine Agricultural Marketing and Bargaining Act of 1973 to Harvesters and Haulers of Forest Products	Oppose	Public law	Complicated concept with unknown implementation potential. The Council was opposed to this bill because we could not make sense about how it would work. Even the logging community was divided in their support of the bill. A board that has traditionally negotiated potato prices will find itself without much guidance in establishing a cooperative for loggers and truckers.
268	Taxation	An Act To Create a Credit under the Commercial Forestry Excise Tax for Landowners Using Businesses Based in the United States	Oppose	Passed to be enacted Held by Governor*	This bill provides a credit against the commercial forestry excise tax for landowners who are based in the United States and who employ and retain businesses or contractors that are based in the United States, that employ at least 75% United States residents and that are current in the payment of all state and local taxes. The bill also requires recapture of the credit if a recipient is found to have been ineligible.
1150	Taxation	An Act To Amend the Maine Tree Growth Tax Law To Encourage Public Access	Oppose	Carried Over	Despite warnings from Maine Revenue Services, bill carried over until next session. Senator Martin has private dispute on ATV connector trail he wants resolved.
1698	Taxation	An Act To Create Jobs and Slow Climate Change by Promoting the Production of Natural Resources Bioproducts	Support	Passed to be enacted Held by Governor*	This bill provides a tax credit for the production of renewable chemicals by the 8 conversion of renewable biomass from the forest, farms, the sea or solid waste. The 9 credit is equal to 7¢ per pound of renewable chemical produced in the State, 9¢ per pound 10 of renewable chemical produced in the State. Other tiers available if commitments to U.S. work force and Master Logger followed. These tiers were protested by MFPC.

*Definition of Held by Governor: "An enacted bill is neither signed, vetoed, nor allowed to become law. If a new Legislative session is held, the Governor must take action on it within three days. If no session occurs, this becomes a "Pocket Veto." Source: *Current and Historical Legislative Abbreviations and Terms*.

Other bills of interest

233	Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry	An Act To Move the Bureau of Parks and Lands from the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife	CONCEPT, Generally encouraging 2-year hiatus	Dead	Administration will be given time to make organization function better.
568	Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry	An Act To Change the Composition of the Maine Land Use Planning Commission	Oppose	Dead	Changed LUPC commissioners from one to three appointed by the Governor.
723	Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry	An Act To Enhance Resource Management of Submerged Lands beneath Impounded Waters	Monitor	Dead	Important precedent that courts have been debating. Legislature declined intervention. Similar bill on Rockweed harvesting was defeated.
1040	Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry	An Act To Waive the Variance Process for Harvesting Timber in a Shoreland Zone	Monitor	Dead	Bill submitted by Association of Consulting Foresters.
1540	Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry	An Act Concerning Timber Harvesting on Public Lands and in State Parks, Historic Sites and the Restricted Zone of the Allagash Wilderness Waterway	Neither for nor against	Dead	Withdrawn by interested parties after discussion with ACF Department.
1605	Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry	An Act To Provide Fair Contracts in the Logging Industry	Oppose	Dead	Senator Carpenter dropped issue after hearing on concept draft.
1726	Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry	An Act To Penalize Violators of Wood Shipment and Quarantine Laws	Support, examining fees	Carried Over	Fees seem large, but discussion to continue next session.
1770	Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry	An Act To Amend the Forestry Laws Regarding Responsibility for Compliance with Those Laws	Support	Carried over	Concerns about liability of loggers in some situations encouraged committee to carry over into next session.
375	Education and Cultural Affairs	An Act To Promote the Forest Products Industry in School Construction and Renovation Involving Heating Systems	Support	Public law	Amended to encourage review of thermal heating options with wood.
434	Energy, Utilities and Technology	An Act To Price Carbon Pollution in Maine	Oppose	Dead	Challenging concept to implement on a state by state basis.
1173	Energy, Utilities and Technology	An Act To Allow the Direct Sale of Electricity	Support	Public law	This amendment replaces the bill. The amendment allows an entity that generates electricity to construct a transmission line for the purpose of interconnecting and distributing electricity to serve a commercial or industrial consumer without becoming subject to regulation by the Public Utilities Commission as a transmission and distribution utility or a competitive electricity provider when the commercial or industrial consumer is located on the property where the generator is located; on abutting property; or on a commercial or industrial site served by the generator or its predecessor without using the transmission and distribution plant of a public utility prior to December 31, 2018.

1494	Energy, Utilities and Technology	An Act To Reform Maine's Renewable Portfolio Standard	Neither for nor against	Public law	This was a comprehensive bill designed to encourage increasing the RPS. Items of interest to the FOR/Maine process as it relates to wood energy include: creation of thermal credits, application of an economic contribution factor as well as price in determining contract awards, and the ability for the PUC to issue long-term contracts for renewable energy. Concerns about major energy cost increases voiced by the large energy consumers resulted in and exemption for this class to opt out of program participation and charges (as suggested in the FOR/Maine plan.)
1622	Energy, Utilities and Technology	An Act To Promote the Use of Wood Pellet Central Heating Systems	Support	Dead	Bill not needed after Efficiency Maine talked to stakeholders about program changes to accommodate needs.
197	Environment and Natural Resources	An Act To Convene a Working Group To Authorize a Public Trust for Maine's Groundwater and To Impose a 2-year Moratorium on Large-scale Groundwater Extraction	Oppose	Dead	All of the water rights bills were defeated. We have always participated in actions that took water rights from landowners and created an extraction tax. The policy implications for other land base resources are all similar. For example Rock Weed harvesters on the coast are not pleased with the legislature refusing to declare this plant in the public domain, but the same principle of property rights applies.
413	Environment and Natural Resources	An Act To Ensure the Rights of Citizens to Groundwater in the State	Oppose	Dead	All of the water rights bills were defeated.
818	Environment and Natural Resources	An Act To Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions	Oppose	Dead	Several of the GHG bills were consolidated into the administration's Climate Change Council (LD 1679)
1080	Environment and Natural Resources	Resolve, Regarding Biofuel in Number 2 Heating Oil	Support	Carried over	Creates a study group.
1358	Environment and Natural Resources	An Act To Further the Public Interest in All Maine Waters	Oppose	Dead	All of the water rights bills were defeated.
1679	Environment and Natural Resources	An Act To Establish the Maine Climate Change Council To Assist Maine To Mitigate, Prepare for and Adapt to Climate Change	Support	Public law	Supportive, industry concerns about getting credit for past efficiencies and fuel switching were granted. Focus is equal on transportation and home heating sectors instead of further regulations on stationary industrial sources. Manufacturing user groups satisfied with compromise. The administration will explore the issue of climate change extensively and it is anticipated that Maine's forest will be an important factor in sequestering carbon. The Council will be working to show how not only the soil and trees in a working forest absorb carbon, but wood products and derivatives are an important option for reducing fossil fuel use.

1706	Environment and Natural Resources	An Act To Ensure Public Notification of Air Quality Violations	Opposed	Public law	DEP testified in favor while industry protested Notice of Violations did not always indicate accurate information by the DEP, therefore inaccurately notifying towns of problems. Action initiated in response to local Portland EPA violations of tank farm emissions not reported to community.
1707	Environment and Natural Resources	An Act To Ensure Accuracy and Reliability of Environmental Testing by Requiring Compliance Testing by 3rd-parties	Opposed	Dead	DEP agreed third-party testing was not required. Legislature agreed.
337	Inland Fisheries & Wildlife	An Act To Start a Spring Bear Hunting Season	Oppose -- road concerns	Dead	Committee listened to concerns by landowner community supported by user groups.
713	Inland Fisheries & Wildlife	An Act To Strengthen Maine's Endangered Species Laws	Monitor to ensure no significant expansion	Public law	This amendment replaces the bill. The amendment: 1. Provides that for conviction of certain Class E crimes of negligence related to endangered or threatened species, the maximum allowable fine of \$1,000 must be adjudged; 2. Removes the requirement that, for a first-time offense of negligently feeding, setting bait for or harassing any endangered or threatened species, a law enforcement officer must issue a warning; 3. Provides that for conviction of certain Class D crimes involving intentional acts related to endangered or threatened species, the maximum allowable fine of \$2,000 must be adjudged; 4. Removes the requirement that, for a first-time offense of intentionally feeding, setting bait for or harassing any endangered or threatened species, a law enforcement officer must issue a warning; 5. Provides that for conviction of certain Class D crimes involving intentional conduct related to a delisted species, the maximum allowable fine of \$2,000 must be adjudged; 6. Removes the requirement that, for a first-time offense of intentionally harassing a delisted species, a law enforcement officer must issue a warning; and 7. Removes the prohibition on intentionally feeding or setting bait for a delisted species.
1147	Inland Fisheries & Wildlife	An Act To Amend the Laws Regarding the Size and Weight of All-terrain Vehicles, the Operation of Motor Vehicles on Designated All-terrain Vehicle Trails and the Operation of All-terrain Vehicles on Trails Posted with Size or Weight Limits and To Update and Improve Funding Mechanisms for All-terrain Vehicle Trail Development and Maintenance	Monitor	Signed by governor	Resolve, To Direct the Commissioner of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife To Study Registration Fees for All-terrain Vehicles and Snowmobiles. Also as a result of Committee discussions the Governor's ATV task force was created and will report back to the legislature with their findings.

1179	Inland Fisheries & Wildlife	An Act To Expand Coyote Hunting to Every Day of the Coyote Hunting Season and To Eliminate Fees	Oppose	Dead	Sunday hunting and lack of maintaining Department oversight doomed this bill.
50	Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Commerce	An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Government Oversight Committee To Improve the Development of a Long-range Strategic Plan for Economic Improvement in the State	Support – maintain identity of FOR/Maine	Dead	Separate effort developed by the Governor.
243	Labor and Housing	An Act To Create an Hourly Rate Compensation System for Loggers and Truckers	CONCEPT	Dead	Never fully developed concept that was dropped by the sponsor.
596	Labor and Housing	An Act To Prevent the Closure of Maine Businesses	Oppose	Dead	Concept to force closing businesses to sell all assets to State or require buyer to maintain business. DECD testified against.
1017	Labor and Housing	An Act Regarding the Elimination of Highly Toxic and Hazardous Chemicals in the Workplace	Oppose	Signed by governor	Turned into a study group managed by the DOL to report back to the legislature.
1413	Labor and Housing	An Act To Reduce Administrative Burdens of Forest Products Harvesters	Support	Dead	Association of Consulting Foresters bill that reduced annual requirement to provide certificate of sole proprietor designation exemption from workers compensation insurance.
948	State & Local Government	An Act To Restrict Ordinances That Affect the Posting of Property for Municipal and Private Land	Support	Dead	This bill provides that a municipality or political subdivision of the State may not enact an ordinance, law or rule regulating the posting of property by marking with signs or paint that is different from the provisions in state law regulating the posting of property by marking with signs or paint.
1415	State & Local Government	An Act To Improve the Laws Regarding Discontinued and Abandoned Roads	Support	Carried Over	Suggested process for municipal road abandonment.
70	Taxation	An Act To Support the Trades through a Tax Credit for Apprenticeship Programs	Support	Carried over	This bill permits an employer who employs an apprentice participating in an approved apprenticeship program to receive a tax credit and provides for a partial credit if the employer employs a participating apprentice for fewer than 2,000 hours in a calendar year.
1074	Taxation	An Act To Establish a Tax on Water Extracted for Bottling in Order To Secure the Economic Future of Rural Maine	Oppose	Dead	This bill creates an excise tax of 12¢ per gallon on the extraction of groundwater or surface water for commercial bottling for sale. Revenue from the tax must be used to improve the economy of the State by supporting the expansion and improvement of high speed broadband access
1643	Taxation	An Act To Establish Municipal Cost Components for Unorganized Territory Services To Be Rendered in Fiscal Year 2019-20	Concerns	Public law	Need landowners to be proactive at the County level. Discrepancies in Aroostook public safety budget line will require MFPC to seek reform in county reporting.

1798	Taxation	An Act To Amend the Maine Tax Laws	Concern about Open Space tax provision	Public law	Committee removed section eliminating 15,000-acre cap on Open Space Tax program.
945	Transportation	An Act To Establish a Blue Ribbon Commission To Study and Recommend Funding Solutions for the State's Transportation Systems	Support	Signed by governor	This resolve proposes to establish a blue ribbon commission to study and recommend additional funding options to adequately fund the state's transportation infrastructure maintenance program
1034	Transportation	An Act To Provide Revenue To Fix and Rebuild Maine's Transportation Infrastructure	Support	Carried Over	Proposes equitable solutions to fund transportation infrastructure.
1157	Transportation	An Act To Fix Maine's Roads and Bridges by Establishing a Seasonal Gasoline Tax Adjustment	Oppose	Dead	Would have affected commercial sales of fuel.
1498	Transportation	An Act To Provide Equity for Commercial Vehicles on Roads and Bridges in Maine	Oppose	Carried Over	Eliminates special permit for selected US mills on Canadian border to by permit allow higher weights. DOT to review and report back next session.