

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

Welcome to the 2019 Legislative Bulletin!

Bulletin 01, 2019 Session
December 27, 2018

The NHMA *Legislative Bulletin* is a weekly publication designed primarily to communicate with municipal officials, but it also serves to keep legislators, the governor's office, and the media informed about municipal legislative priorities. The *Bulletin* will be published next on Friday, January 4, and each Friday after that until the legislative session ends in June. The *Bulletin* generally contains:

- A brief analysis of key legislative developments during the past week;
- An update on any action on NHMA policy bills;
- The legislative calendar, listing municipal bills to be heard in the next two weeks;
- A call for action on critical legislation when municipal input is necessary; and
- Periodic updates of federal issues of interest to municipal officials.

Early editions of the *Legislative Bulletin*, including this one, will also contain a brief description of bills introduced for the session that we have identified as being of municipal interest, along with the name of the prime sponsor and the committee to which the bill has been referred.

To serve our members more efficiently, we post the *Legislative Bulletin* on our website (www.nhmunicipal.org) each Friday and send an e-mail notice and link when it is posted, to provide it electronically to as many as we can. However, local officials and legislators may choose to receive the *Bulletin* by U.S. mail if they prefer. (See the article on page 2 for more on this subject.)

This publication is designed to inform and update. If you have ideas about providing information in a different format or a more understandable fashion, please let us know. You can reach us at governmentaffairs@nhmunicipal.org or the phone number on the *Legislative Bulletin* letterhead.

Invite Your Legislators to Your Next Meeting!

If you want to have a positive effect on municipal legislation in 2019, one of the best things you can do **right now** is to invite your legislative delegation to your next board of selectmen/council/aldermen meeting. This applies whether your legislators are veterans, rookies, or a combination of the two.

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Over the next several months, there will be occasions when we will ask you to contact your legislators (or you will want to contact them, even without being asked) to discuss pending legislation. Making a cold call to someone you've never met is no fun for even the hardest extrovert, and for many people it is downright intimidating.

That is why it makes sense to invite your legislators to a meeting **now**, before you need to call them to ask for support on a particular issue. If you have a get-acquainted session with your legislators, in which you talk generally about legislative priorities and concerns without asking anything specific of them, you will feel much more comfortable, and will almost certainly get a better reception, when you call them in a few weeks or months to ask them to support or oppose a particular bill.

Here are a few suggestions:

- Invite all of your representatives and your senator. (If you don't know who they are, go to [this page](#) and click on your county, then your city or town—or call us.)
- Set aside time at the meeting for all of the legislators and all members of your governing body to introduce themselves.
- Make it a two-way exchange. Share your concerns with them, but also ask them about their priorities and what they expect from this year's legislature.
- Mention NHMA's legislative policies, which you can find [here](#) and in the November/December issue of *Town & City*. We will be sending the legislative policies to all legislators in early January, and we will inform you about our policy bills in upcoming issues of the *Bulletin*.
- Remember that municipal issues are mostly non-partisan. You do not have to share your legislators' views on international trade, immigration, or U.S. Supreme Court nominees in order to find common ground on issues that affect your city or town.
- Exchange contact information, and ask them what is the best way to contact them: phone, e-mail, or something else.
- Remember that they work for you, and with rare exceptions, they **do** want to hear from their local government leaders.

House and Senate to Meet January 2; Committees to Follow

The House and Senate will meet (separately) in session at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 2. They are likely to be short sessions, where each chamber will introduce bills and attend to various administrative details. The House and Senate will meet in joint session at 11:15 a.m. on Thursday, January 3, for the inauguration of the Governor.

Legislative committees will begin meeting the week of January 7; meetings that week will likely be limited to committee orientations. We expect that hearings on bills will begin the week of January 14.

How Do You Take Your Legislative Bulletin?

Each week last year we sent an electronic link to the *Legislative Bulletin* to over 800 recipients, and sent over 300 paper copies by U.S. mail. Some municipal officials received both the hard copy and the electronic version.

We want to make sure the *Bulletin* is being sent to you in the most effective way. Our primary concern is that you get to read the *Bulletin* in a timely way and have an opportunity to contact your legislators on matters that are important to your municipality and local government. The e-mailed *Bulletin* gets to you on Friday, while the hard copy will not arrive until Saturday or even Monday. This can make a big difference, given that the *Bulletin* usually provides notice of events that will occur the following Tuesday through Thursday. Sending the *Bulletin* electronically also avoids the cost of postage. With those thoughts in mind, please consider switching from a hard copy to the electronic version.

For those who still prefer to receive a hard copy, we want to make sure we have your best mailing address. If elected municipal leaders receive their hard copy of the *Bulletin* at the town or city hall, they may not actually see it for a week or more after it's distributed. Again, the whole point of the *Bulletin* is timeliness.

Therefore, if you would be willing to have the *Bulletin* mailed to your home so that you can receive it more promptly, we hope you will give us your home mailing address. If you choose to receive the *Bulletin* at your home, it will not change where you receive other NHMA mailings.

Your preference. With that background, please take a moment to consider how you are currently receiving the *Bulletin* and whether you want to change how it is distributed to you.

If you would like to make a change in the delivery of your *Bulletin*, whether it is to go from hard copy to electronic or to change the address to which we mail your *Bulletin*, please contact us by calling or e-mailing Pam Valley at 1-800-852-3358 ext. 3375 or governmentaffairs@nhmunicipal.org.

New Bills, New Committees

Before yesterday, only a handful of bills for the 2019 session had been released, but the floodgates opened just as this *Bulletin* was going to press. The first few bills of municipal interest are listed below (after the committee assignments). When the dust settles, it appears that there will be around 1,000 bills filed this year. All of them will become available on the legislature's website, www.gencourt.state.nh.us, as they are completed and released. As they are released, we will publish lists of the bills of municipal interest in the *Bulletin*.

Committee assignments have been made in both the House and the Senate, and you can find the complete listing on the legislative website. Below are the committees that are of particular interest to municipal officials. (This is not to suggest that other committees are any less important—they are just less likely to deal with municipal issues.) If you know, or have a special relationship with, any of the members of these committees, please let us know. Making connections is an important way to make sure municipal interests are understood and taken into account. Please contact the Government Affairs staff at governmentaffairs@nhmunicipal.org.

Note: The House Finance Committee roster appears to be incomplete. Check the legislature's website in a few days, as we expect there will be an updated list.

House Standing Committees

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New 2019 House Bills

Note: Each entry shows the bill number, a description of the bill, the name and municipality of the prime sponsor, and the committee to which the bill has been assigned.

HB 101 allows a school district to adopt and enforce a policy regulating the use, possession, and transportation of firearms and knives within its jurisdiction. Rep. Cali-Pitts of Portsmouth; **EDUC-H**.

HB 102 permits towns to adopt bylaws to regulate the distribution of single-use plastics. Rep. Bartlett of Concord; **M&CG**.

HB 103-FN-A establishes the office of the right-to-know ombudsman and authorizes the filing of right-to-know complaints with the ombudsman as an alternative to bringing suit in superior court. Rep. Ober of Hudson; **JUD-H**.

HB 104-FN establishes a housing appeals board in the attorney general’s office to hear appeals of final decisions of municipal boards, committees, and commissions regarding questions of housing and housing development. Rep. Ober of Hudson; **JUD-H**.

HB 105-FN modifies the definition of domicile for voting purposes, modifies forms and procedures for voter registration, and removes the requirement that the secretary of state conduct post-election voter registration inquiries. Rep. Horrigan of Durham; **EL**.

HB 106 amends the general statutory definitions of “resident or inhabitant” and “residence or residency” to include an intent to maintain a principal place of physical presence for the indefinite future. Rep. Horrigan of Durham; **EL**.

HB 110-FN-A requires that the administrative and professional cost of the fiscal analysis of proposed legislation done by the retirement system be reimbursed from general funds not otherwise appropriated. Rep. Rogers of Concord; **ED&A**.

HB 116-FN modifies the procedure for changes to the job classification and group under the state retirement system for state agency positions and for political subdivision positions. Rep. McGuire of Epsom; **ED&A**.

HB 125 allows the county convention and the county commissioners to choose their officers by secret ballot and adds an exemption to the right-to-know law for secret ballots for the election of officers. Rep. Marsh of Brookfield; **M&CG**.

HB 128 enables municipalities to adopt a 100 percent property tax exemption for veterans who have been determined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs to have a 100 percent, service-connected, total and permanent disability. Rep. Comtois of Barnstead; **M&CG**.

HB 129 enables municipalities to establish a cap on the state and local education property tax for residents aged 65 and older. Rep. Comtois of Barnstead; **M&CG**.

HB 130-LOCAL clarifies the property tax exemption for certain permanently and totally disabled veterans by adopting the definition of permanent total disability in the federal regulations. Rep. Panasiti of Amherst; **M&CG**.

HB 133-FN repeals the licensing requirement for open-air shows and repeals the laws related to the keeping of billiard tables, pool tables, and bowling alleys. Rep. Seaworth of Pembroke; **ED&A**.

HB 135 requires the commissioner of the department of transportation to notify a municipality of the lease of any state-owned rail property and requires the lease of state-owned rail property to meet the same municipal regulatory and safety requirements as private property owners. Rep. Abel of Lebanon; **PW**.

HB 136 increases the period within which a zoning board of adjustment must hold a public hearing. Rep. Tanner of Sunapee; **M&CG**.

HB 142 provides that, if the owner of property subject to a tax deferral dies, the mortgage holder must pay all deferred taxes before selling the property in a foreclosure proceeding. Rep. Belanger of Hollis; **M&CG**.

HB 143 prohibits any person from serving on two municipal boards or committees at the same time if decisions of one board or committee are appealable to the other. Rep. Belanger of Hollis; **M&CG**.

HB 144 requires municipalities to notify property owners of annual changes in assessed value made pursuant to RSA 75:8, and to state the basis for the adjustment and provide notice of the appeal procedure. Rep. Belanger of Hollis; **M&CG**.

HB 145 provides that a ballot cast at town meeting shall not be disregarded for failure to follow instructions if the voter's intent is clear. Rep. Belanger of Hollis; **M&CG**.

HB 146 modifies recount procedures for towns and village districts. Rep. Belanger of Hollis; **M&CG**.

HB 147 extends the period for a candidate to appeal an election recount. Rep. Belanger of Hollis; **EL**.

HB 148 defines and regulates electric bicycles. Rep. Gould of Bedford; **TRANS-H**.

HB 149 permits the apportionment formula for a cooperative school district to be subject to review 5 years after an article to continue the current formula was passed. Rep. Belanger of Hollis; **EDUC-H**.

HB 151 allows a farm to raise livestock with an intent to sell such livestock and still be considered within the definition of agriculture. Rep. O'Connor of Derry; **E&A**.

HB 153 makes certain disciplinary records concerning law enforcement officers subject to the right-to-know law. Rep. Berch of Westmoreland; **JUD-H**.

HB 154 renders void and unenforceable a nondisclosure agreement that is part of a settlement involving a state officer or employee, or a public agency or body. Rep. Berch of Westmoreland; **JUD-H**.

HB 155 requires a determination of whether information in a police officer's personnel file constitutes exculpatory evidence and allows a police officer who has information determined to be exculpatory evidence in his or her personnel file to have an opportunity to challenge the disciplinary finding. Rep. Berch of Westmoreland; **CJ&PS**.

HB 184-FN increases funding for pupils attending full-day kindergarten programs and repeals prorated kindergarten funding based on Keno revenue. Rep. Luneau of Hopkinton; **EDUC-H**.

HB 186 establishes a state minimum wage of \$9.50 per hour and provides for annual readjustment of the minimum wage. Rep. Moffett of Canterbury; **LABOR**.

HB 187 establishes new state representative districts for Hudson and Pelham. Rep. Horrigan of Durham; **EL**.



2019 Upcoming Workshops and Webinars for Members:

Jan 8, 9, and 23: NHMA Webinars

Jan 12 and Feb 16: NHMA Moderators Workshops

Jan 16: NHMA Right-to-Know Law Workshop for Law Enforcement

Please register online through our website www.nhmunicipal.org. (Scroll down on left to Calendar of Events and click View the Full Calendar)

