

# LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

## Welcome to the 2021 Legislative Bulletin!

The NHMA Legislative Bulletin is a weekly publication designed primarily to communicate with municipal officials, but it also serves to keep legislators, other state officials, and the media informed about municipal legislative priorities. The next Bulletin will be published on Friday, January 8, and weekly Bulletins will be published each Friday after that until the legislative session ends in (we hope) 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 on federal issues of interest to municipal officials.

Early editions of the Legislative Bulletin 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.

We post the Legislative Bulletin on our website, [www.nhmunicipal.org](http://www.nhmunicipal.org), each Friday and send an e-mail notice with links when it is posted, to provide it electronically to as many readers as we can. We have recently changed our communication platform, and ***if you want to receive the Legislative Bulletin electronically, you must subscribe now—even if you have received it in the past.*** However, local officials and legislators may also choose to receive the Bulletin by U.S. mail if they prefer. (See the article on page 3 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.

NHMA Legislative Bulletin 01  
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## Legislative Session Begins, Slowly

Due to the many challenges created by the coronavirus, including the untimely death of the newly elected House Speaker, some of the regular processes marking the beginning of the biennial legislative term have been delayed slightly. Ordinarily, all committee assignments would have been made by mid-December and a few hundred bills would have been released by now.

Senate committees were appointed a couple weeks ago, but as of this morning, House committees have not been publicly announced, and no bills have been released yet. However, there was an indication in the most recent House calendar that committees may be announced today; and we anticipate that the new bills—over 800 of them—will be on their way very soon.

In the meantime, the House and Senate will meet (separately) in session on Wednesday, January 6, as required by the state constitution. Convening the 400 House members safely under current conditions is a daunting task. The last we heard, the tentative plan was to have representatives meet in a “drive-in” session in a parking lot on the University of New Hampshire campus, where members will be able to communicate and vote from their cars.

Ordinarily, committee meetings would begin the following week, but those, too, appear likely to be delayed. Presumably most or all committee meetings and hearings will be held virtually (although there has been some disagreement about that), and working through the complexities of managing dozens of electronic meetings every week is challenging. Our understanding is that committee hearings are likely to begin in late January or even early February. To bring some efficiency to the process, we understand that some bills will be combined for hearing purposes. Otherwise, the legislature could be forced to meet well into the summer, and no one would be happy about that.

Clearly, 2021 is going to be an unusual and difficult year. We will do our best to stay on top of events and keep you informed.

## Invite Your Legislators to Your Next Meeting

If you want to have a positive effect on municipal legislation in 2021, 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.

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 [the "Who's My Legislator" page](#) on the [House of Representatives website](#) and select your city or town from the drop-down menu—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 2021-2022 legislative policies, which you can find on [the NHMA website](#) under the Advocacy tab. We will be sending the legislative policies to all legislators in January, and we will inform you about our policy bills in upcoming issues of the Bulletin. Also mention and share our publication "[Municipal State Aid and Revenue Sharing](#)," which can be found on the same page.
- 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 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.

### Subscribe to the Legislative Bulletin!

As mentioned above, we recently switched our communication platform to another provider, Mailchimp. This is an *opt-in* service. This means that ***if you want to receive the Legislative Bulletin electronically, you must subscribe—even if you have received it in the past.*** You can subscribe by going to the [Legislative Bulletins page](#) on our website. Once there, click on "Register Now," and it should take you less than a minute to subscribe.

Each week last year we sent the Legislative Bulletin electronically to over 800 recipients and sent over 200 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 efficient way. Our primary concern is that you get to read the Bulletin and have an opportunity to contact your legislators before they take action on matters that are important to your municipality and local government. The e-mailed Bulletin always arrives on Friday, while the hard copy will not arrive until Saturday at the earliest; Monday is more common. With recent USPS slowdowns, we anticipate that mail may take even longer to arrive this session. Given that the Bulletin provides notice of events that will occur the following week, that means those who choose to get the Bulletin via U.S. mail may miss the crucial opportunity to talk to their legislators before they vote. Even if you haven't in the past, please consider switching from a hard copy to the electronic version to ensure that you have the opportunity to have your voice heard.

## Senate Committee Members

Below are the rosters for the Senate committees that regularly deal with legislation affecting municipal government. Please make a note if your senator is on one or more of these committees—you may need to communicate with him or her frequently! As mentioned above, House committee assignments should be coming soon.

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**Glossary of Abbreviations Used in  
Bill Descriptions and the Legislative Process**

CACR	Constitutional Amendment Concurrent Resolution
CAP BUDGET	Capital Budget Committee (Senate)
C&FL	Children & Family Law Committee (House)
CJ&PS	Criminal Justice & Public Safety Committee (House)
COM-S	Commerce Committee (Senate)
COM-H	Commerce and Consumer Affairs Committee (House)
E&A	Environment & Agriculture Committee (House)
ED&A-S	Executive Departments & Administration Committee (Senate)
ED&A-H	Executive Departments & Administration Committee (House)
EDUC-S	Education Committee (Senate)
EDUC-H	Education Committee (House)
EL	Election Law Committee (House)
EL&MA	Election Law & Municipal Affairs Committee (Senate)
ENR	Energy & Natural Resources Committee (Senate)
F-S	Finance Committee (Senate)
F-H	Finance Committee (House)
F&G	Fish & Game and Marine Resources Committee (House)
FN	Fiscal Note
HB	House Bill
HHS	Health & Human Services Committee (Senate)
HHS&EA	Health, Human Services & Elderly Affairs Committee (House)
JUD-S	Judiciary Committee (Senate)
JUD-H	Judiciary Committee (House)
L	Local
LABOR	Labor, Industrial & Rehabilitative Services Committee (House)
LEGIS ADMIN	Legislative Administration Committee (House)
LOB	Legislative Office Building
M&CG	Municipal & County Government Committee (House)
PW	Public Works & Highways Committee (House)
RR&D	Resources, Recreation & Development Committee (House)
RULES	Rules Committee (House)
RULES&EB	Rules & Enrolled Bills Committee (Senate)
SB	Senate Bill
S-FR	State-Federal Relations & Veterans Affairs Committee (House)
SH	State House
ST&E	Science, Technology & Energy Committee (House)
TRANS-S	Transportation Committee (Senate)
TRANS-H	Transportation Committee (House)
W&M-S	Ways & Means Committee (Senate)
W&M-H	Ways & Means Committee (House)