

# LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

Legislative Bulletin 08

2024 Session

February 23, 2024



[Live Bill Tracker](#)

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## A Slow(er) Week

Next week is school vacation week. Traditionally, that also means that it's Senate vacation week. This year, the House will be joining the Senate in scheduling as few activities as possible next week. That doesn't mean that all work will stop. There's still plenty to do to prepare for the following week—which promises to be another busy one!—but for those of you planning vacations, you need not worry about immediate deadlines.

### **Reminder: Executive Session on Anti-Lobbying Bill**

On **March 6, 2024**, at **10:00 a.m.**, the [House Legislative Administration Committee](#) will hold its executive session on [HB 1479](#), the anti-lobbying bill that we covered in depth in [Bulletin #6](#). Many of our members wrote letters in opposition or came to Concord to testify, as this bill would not only prohibit organizations like NHMA from representing their members, but would also prohibit local officials (and many others, including nonprofits) from participating in the legislative process. We know that several members have submitted letters to the committee in opposition since the hearing, and we encourage you to continue to reach out to the committee and your own representatives (and remember to email a copy of your correspondence asking them to oppose **HB 1479** to us).

## Reminder: Executive Session on Immunity Repeal Bill

On **March 6, 2024**, at **10:00 a.m.**, the [House Judiciary Committee](#) will hold its executive session on [HB 1640](#), the bill that would allow claims against municipalities under *any* provision in the New Hampshire or United States Constitution, repealing all immunity provisions and liability caps. We wrote extensively about the impact of this bill in [Bulletin #6](#). We encourage you to continue to reach out to the committee to explain the problems with the bill (and remember to email a copy of your correspondence asking them to oppose **HB 1640** to us).

## A Housing Update

The past week and a half has seen a number of critical hearings on the most controversial of the [70 land use bills](#) that NHMA is following this session. In many of those hearings, amendments were offered to the originally drafted bills, some of which are available as digital copies on the individual bill's pages.

NHMA has vigorously defended its [member-adopted position](#) to *oppose* any legislation that creates a statewide land-use mandate. At the same time, NHMA has proposed several amendments that seek to solve some of the issues identified in legislation in a manner that preserves local control and leverages policy options that either have a proven track record of success or are likely to lead to success.

For example, on [HB 1053](#), which identifies the changing use of some commercial districts, NHMA [proposed](#) a solution derived from several sections of pending [SB 538](#). That solution would seek to expand the use of the Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive, RSA 79-E:2, to provide a local option to provide incentives to address conversions of commercial spaces to residential spaces. Those who have used the existing tools provided by RSA 79-E know how effective it can be to promote revitalization of areas not currently experiencing best use of land, while also helping municipalities continue to guide development as outlined in their master plans.

As outlined in the [first part](#) of *Local Solutions to the State's Housing Crisis Webinar Series: Our Housing Shortage*, there are many pieces of the housing shortage puzzle. In the subsequent four parts ([register](#) for next week's part three: *YIMBYism - A Different Approach to Development*), speakers, including local officials, state experts, and developers, will explain what solutions we know will make progress in solving the puzzle.

Unfortunately, solutions take time. We saw the legislature adopt substantial changes during the 2022 session ([learn more](#)), the effects of which municipalities across the state are seeing now. It is likely that the legislature will pass additional legislation this session. We are hopeful that by working with our partners to promote a collaborative approach between the state, municipalities, and other key stakeholders to address the state's housing shortage, we can help pass legislation that will improve the disparity between housing demand and housing supply across all income levels.

We understand that the House Special Committee on Housing **will be meeting** in a work session the Friday after the break (March 8). We do not yet know what that committee will decide to recommend on the bills before it, but we are hopeful that it will support our members' positions and provide options that encourage collaborative approaches between the state, municipalities, and other key stakeholders.

### **Reminder: Local Solutions to the State's Housing Crisis Webinar Series**

NHMA is proud to partner with New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs, New Hampshire Planners Association, New Hampshire Association of Regional Planning Commissions, University of New Hampshire Extension, PLAN NH, New Hampshire Housing, Community Development Finance Authority, and the Center for Ethics in Society at Saint Anselm College on a 5-part webinar series focusing on local solutions to New Hampshire's housing shortage. The other programs in the series are:

**"YIMBYism: A Different Approach to Development"** (Thursday, February 29)

**"Transfer of Development Rights 101: A Primer"** (Thursday, March 7)

**"Attracting Developers"** (Thursday, March 14)

The series will highlight a variety of actions municipalities are taking to improve the housing shortage. We've all seen numerous news reports about, for instance, the **2,717 housing units that will shortly be under construction in Concord** (a **14% increase** in housing units), but this series will delve into the factors that lead to success and how growth can balance against existing demands for municipal services. We hope that you will register via the links above and join us during this series.

### **Reminder: Get Involved in NHMA's Legislative Policy Process**

NHMA's biennial legislative policy process is getting underway. As a first step, we are recruiting volunteers to serve on our three legislative policy committees. These committees will review legislative policy proposals submitted by local officials and make recommendations on those policies, which will go to the NHMA Legislative Policy Conference in September.

***If you are a municipal official in a city or town and are interested in serving on one of the policy committees, please contact the Government Affairs staff at 603-224-7447 or [governmentaffairs@nhmunicipal.org](mailto:governmentaffairs@nhmunicipal.org).***

Each of the committees deals with a different set of municipal issues. The committees and their subject areas are as follows:

- **Finance and Revenue** – budgeting, revenue, tax exemptions, current use, assessing, tax collection, retirement issues, education funding.
- **General Administration and Governance** – elections, Right-to-Know Law, labor, town meeting, charters, welfare, public safety.

- Infrastructure, Development, and Land Use – solid/hazardous waste, transportation, land use, technology, environmental regulation, housing, utilities, code enforcement, economic development.

When you contact us, please indicate your first and second choices for a committee assignment. We will do our best to accommodate everyone's first choice, but we strive for equal membership among the committees. We hope to have 15-20 members on each committee.

There will be an organizational meeting for all committees on **Friday, April 5**. After that, each committee will meet separately as many times as necessary to review the policy proposals assigned to it—typically three to five meetings, all held on either a Monday or Friday, between early April and the end of May.

**[Bill Hearings Schedule](#)**  
**[NHMA Events Calendar](#)**

**2023 Final Legislative Bulletin**

**Website: [www.nhmunicipal.org](http://www.nhmunicipal.org)**

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