

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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Welcome to the 2013 Legislative Bulletin!

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 *Legislative Bulletin* is published each Friday during the legislative session. 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 to three weeks;
- A call for action on critical scheduled hearings when municipal input is necessary; and
- Periodic updates of 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.

To serve our members more efficiently, we post the *Legislative Bulletin* on our website (www.nhlgc.org) each Friday and send an e-mail notice when it is posted, to provide it electronically to as many as we can. If you are receiving the *Bulletin* by U.S. mail and would prefer to receive it electronically instead, please let us know so that we may update our e-mail address list accordingly. The *Legislative Bulletin* will get to you much sooner electronically -- and time is often of the essence with the legislative process!

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@nhlgc.org or the phone number on the *Legislative Bulletin* letterhead.

Meet with Your Delegation!

We recently sent a letter to every NHMA member municipality with information about your new (or continuing) representatives and senators. We strongly encourage you to meet with your legislators as early as possible to let them know about issues of concern to your municipality. Inviting legislators to your local governing body meetings is an efficient way to accomplish this. Some legislators are very good about keeping in touch with their local officials, but others are a little less so. They may need some encouragement—please do not be shy about calling them.

House and Senate to Meet in Session January 2

The House and Senate will meet in session on Wednesday, January 2, 2013, both beginning at 10:00 a.m. Although no schedule has been published yet for the day's activities, they will likely adopt rules, introduce bills, and attend to other administrative details. The House and Senate will meet in joint session at noon on Thursday, January 3, for the inauguration of the Governor. The ceremony is traditionally by invitation only, due to limited seating.

DRA Proposes Equalization Rule Changes

The Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) is readopting the administrative rules governing the submission of data necessary for the annual equalization process. The proposed rules include technical and substantive amendments, most notably a requirement that all data be submitted electronically. A public hearing on the proposed rules is scheduled for **Thursday, December 20, 2012, at 10:00 a.m.** at the DRA office, **109 Pleasant Street, Concord.** The deadline to submit written comments is **Thursday, December 27, 2012.** A copy of the proposed rule is available on the DRA website at <http://www.revenue.nh.gov/laws/proposed.htm>

Current Use Administrative Rule Changes

The Current Use Board is in the process of adopting amendments to its administrative rules, including changes to the assessment ranges for land enrolled under current use effective April 1, 2013, and changes to the rule governing condominium developments. The rules are tentatively scheduled for a public hearing before the Joint Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules on **Thursday, December 20, at 9:00 a.m., in LOB Room 305.** Copies of the proposed rules are available on the Current Use Board section of the Department of Revenue Administrations website at http://www.revenue.nh.gov/munc_prop/current_use/proposed-rules.htm

SB 2 Committee Recommendations

A number of interim study committees and other legislative committees met over the summer and fall to consider possible future legislation. Many of those efforts came to naught, but at least one committee made some recommendations that may go forward. The Committee to Assess the Form of Government in Towns that Have Elected the Official Ballot Referendum Form of Meeting issued a [report](#) recommending legislation to (1) allow the use of the charter amendment procedure under RSA 49-B to make local changes to the SB 2 form of government; (2) require

SB 2 Committee Recommendations - continued

a 60 percent majority to amend petitioned warrant articles at a deliberative session; (3) require the default budget to be posted in three prominent places; (4) allow the governing body to provide for a special meeting to be held in the event the budget is not adopted on the official ballot, as an alternative to relying on the default budget; and (5) clarify the definition and calculation of the default budget.

We are not aware of any legislation that has been filed yet to implement these recommendations, although there are, as usual, a significant number of LSR titles that deal with the official ballot form of town meeting. If your town has adopted SB 2, check the next several *Bulletins* to see what changes are being proposed.

New Bills, New Committees

As of this writing, more than 700 legislative service requests (LSRs) are being drafted into bills, which will become available on the legislature's website, www.gencourt.state.nh.us, as they are completed and are formally introduced. The House deadline for filing LSRs was December 7, but the Senate deadline is this Thursday, December 20, so there likely will be close to 1,000 bills by the time everything is filed.

Committee assignments have been made in the Senate, and you can find the complete listing on the legislative website; House committee assignments have not been announced yet. Below are the Senate committees that are of particular interest to municipal officials. 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@nhlgc.org

Senate Committees

ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

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Bob Odell, **Vice Chair**
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EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

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Senate Committees - continued**JUDICIARY**

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Bod Odell, Chair	Chuck Morse
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FairPoint Property Tax Litigation

This fall FairPoint Communications filed lawsuits in superior court against approximately 140 towns and cities over the assessment of the company's telephone poles and use of municipal rights-of-way. A number of law firms are representing the various municipalities in defending these laws, and NHMA has compiled a list of the firms, which is available [here](#). Presumably all affected municipalities have retained legal counsel by now, but this information may be useful if municipalities or their legal counsel want to consult with each other. We will update the list and share more information as it becomes available.