

New Hampshire Municipal Association

THE SERVICE AND ACTION ARM OF NEW HAMPSHIRE MUNICIPALITIES

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

Final Legislative Bulletin

2026 Session

September 14, 2026



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Final 2026 Legislative Bulletin



Year in Review: Less Drama, More Wins

The 2026 legislative session, which wrapped up in early June after lawmakers worked through roughly 1,200 new or retained bills, produced a mixed bag of statutory changes impacting New Hampshire municipalities. This was a year in which many of the wins for local government were defensive ones, such as successful fights to stop or soften bills that would have further eroded municipal decision-making. However, a handful of enactments genuinely expanded municipal tools or restored local input, including long-debated landfill siting legislation.

NHMA 2026 Legislative Scorecard



- **27%** of bills supported by NHMA became law (26 of 95)
- **15%** of bills opposed by NHMA became law (18 of 122)

Here is a summary of some key areas of legislative focus in 2026:

Zoning, planning and land use: As in 2025, development-related and land use bills took center-stage again this year, with more than 75 bills touching local decision-making in this area. While a slate of bills seeking to repeal or reasonably modify some of the major changes enacted last year were quickly killed, the continued push to limit local decision-making regarding housing/residential development continued, including further expansion (HB 1588, *see below*) of the 2025 mandate requiring multifamily housing in commercial zones.

The false narrative that local government is the culprit for housing availability and affordability remained impervious to facts, including [data released](#) in January by the state Department of Business and Economic Affairs (BEA) showing that New Hampshire's cities and towns issued building permits for 5,822 housing units in calendar year 2024, which was the highest annual number since 2006. This upsurge in permitting *preceded* the plethora of bills preempting local choice on zoning and land use enacted in 2025 and further supported the premise of NHMA's January 2026 whitepaper, "[Room for Everyone](#)," which traces the roots of the housing deficit, outlining the combination of economic, demographic, and market forces that fueled rising prices and constrained supply.

Not every land use bill this session cut against municipalities, however. Another bill (HB 1010, *see below*) that also dealt with allowing multi-family dwellings on commercially zoned land, gave cities and towns explicit authority to require traffic and water/sewer impact studies for these projects—a concession NHMA had sought.

Additionally, several of the more sweeping subdivision and site-plan preemption proposals flagged by NHMA early in the session—including unworkable project and permit review timelines and unlimited dead-end road development—did not survive in their original, broadest form; some were narrowed, some amended, or some sent to interim study.

Perhaps the clearest local choice victory of the session was the tabling of a bill (SB 439) that would have limited a local government's ability to regulate data centers more strictly than other commercial uses in the same zone and would have made data centers permitted by right in commercial and industrial zones.

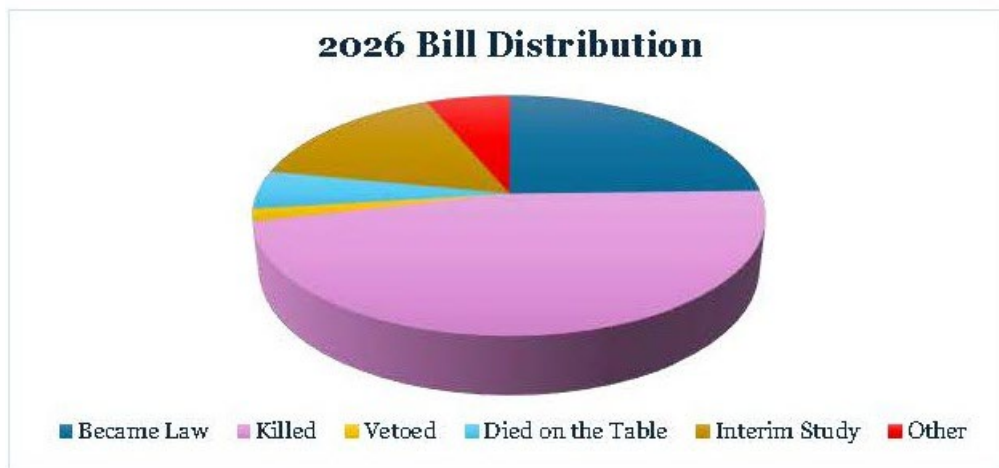
Landfill siting and expansion: After roughly seven years of House-Senate disagreement, lawmakers reached a compromise (HB 707, *see below*) on landfill siting, which creates a Solid Waste Site Evaluation Committee to review proposed landfills against a broader set of criteria—human health, environmental impact, and local economic effects among them. Proponents said the bill would also give municipalities a stronger voice in the process, and local zoning was not impacted.

Elections and town meeting: This was another topic area with dozens of bills, many of which were filed by the same few legislators. NHMA's advocacy helped convince the

Senate or House that many of these bills, particularly those dealing with town meetings, were either unnecessary or created unresolved administrative or legal issues. That said, more than 20 bills on these topics became law, most of which dealt with election procedures.

General government: New laws passed this year allow municipalities to require proof of residency for welfare assistance and add details to how no trespass orders (NTOs) on municipal or school district property are issued.

Risk pools: The simmering disagreement over regulation of pooled risk management programs, often called insurance risk pools, continued this year. The status quo remained in place as the governor vetoed a pair of bills addressing the issue from different angles because she believed more work needed to be done. Resolving the regulatory framework remains a priority given how much health insurance costs are outpacing inflation for municipal budgets.



New Laws by Topic

Here is a summary of the laws affecting cities and towns that were enacted in 2026, listed by topic in the order in which they were signed. If you have specific questions, the entire bill should be reviewed. The links below will take you to the *Fast Democracy* page for the underlying bill. Click on “Chaptered Final Version” to view the full text of the new law. **Note:** The links may no longer work later this year when the NH General Court archives the bills from the 2026 session; at that time, refer directly to the relevant statutes, which are available [here](#).

NHMA has [prepared guidance](#) on several new laws enacted this year. **Laws denoted with an asterisk (*)** are included in one of the guidance documents.

Authorized officials in member municipalities with specific questions about the application of these and other statutes may contact NHMA Legal Services at

legalinquiries@nhmunicipal.org or 603-413-4441. If you are unsure whether you are an authorized official, please contact your town administrator, town or city manager, or a member of the municipal governing body.

Note: Some bills listed below contained provisions unrelated to municipal operations; those sections are not included in the summaries.

PLANNING, ZONING AND LAND USE

Local amendments to state building code. [Chapter 17 \(SB 94\)](#) repeals the allowance for municipal amendments to the technical requirements of the state building code when the state code is more than two editions behind the published model codes. Municipalities may still implement amendments related to the issuance of permits and administrative functions, provided they are not less stringent than the state code. **Effective: July 1, 2026. Statute: RSA 155-A**

* ***Dual participation on planning board and ZBA.*** [Chapter 33 \(HB 1246\)](#) stipulates that when an application or development project is being considered by both the planning board and the zoning board, a member who serves on both boards may only participate and vote on one of them. **Effective: June 21, 2026. Statute: RSA 673**

* ***Updating the state building code.*** [Chapter 49 \(HB 1159\)](#) replaces the year 2021 with 2024 for the International Building Code, International Existing Building Code, International Plumbing Code, International Mechanical Code, International Swimming Pool and Spa Code, and International Residential Code. Additionally, it establishes that the National Electrical Code will be referenced as the 2023 edition. **Effective: July 1, 2026. Statute: RSA 155-A**

Board of Tax and Land Appeals (BTLA) membership. [Chapter 64 \(SB 489\)](#) amends the appointment process for the BTLA by changing how members are appointed, eliminating fixed terms and stating that members of the board shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the governor and Executive Council. **Effective: May 8, 2026. Statute: RSA 71-B**

Development districts. [Chapter 83 \(HB 1161\)](#) removes the requirement for municipalities to have an advisory board for development districts. **Effective: July 21, 2026. Statute: RSA 162-K**

Public charter schools and governmental land use exemptions. [Chapter 118 \(HB 1093\)](#) grants chartered public schools the status of governmental entity for land-use purposes, aligning them with other public entities. The law requires these schools to provide written notification to the relevant municipal governing body and planning board regarding any substantial changes or new uses of property at least 60 days prior to construction. **Effective: August 4, 2026. Statutes: RSA 194-B; RSA 674**

Optional flood resilience section in municipal master plans. [Chapter 170 \(HB 1468\)](#) allows municipalities the option to include a flood resilience section in master plans. The new section would identify existing and potential flood risks and establish goals and recommendations aimed at reducing flood-related risks to public safety, property, municipal infrastructure, evacuation routes, and emergency access. **Effective: August 18, 2026. Statute: RSA 674**

**** Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in non-conforming structures.*** [Chapter 201 \(HB 1079\)](#) amends the definition of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to permit their construction within nonconforming structures in place before July 1, 2025. It also applies the same vesting procedures for approved subdivisions to approved building permits for ADUs. **Effective: August 31, 2026. Statute: RSA 674**

Community revitalization tax credits. [Chapter 212 \(HB 1103\)](#) allows municipalities to utilize community revitalization tax relief credits on a wider variety of properties and structures. **Effective: August 31, 2026. Statute: RSA 79-E**

**** Childcare centers in commercial zones.*** [Chapter 217 \(HB 1195\)](#) defines childcare centers for purposes of local zoning requirements and provides that, with limited exception, municipalities shall allow the operation of a childcare center by right on commercially zoned land, provided that the center is in compliance with the childcare licensing requirements of the state Department of Health and Human Services. **Effective: July 1, 2026. Statute: RSA 674**

Expanded authority for state fire marshal. [Chapter 231 \(HB 1555\)](#) allows the state fire marshal to hear de novo appeals of local fire chief decisions within set timelines and grants the fire marshal statewide authority to approve, deny, or allow project-specific alternatives and code modifications under the state building code. **Effective: July 1, 2027. Statutes: RSA 153; RSA 155**

**** Development on dead-end roads.*** [Chapter 316 \(SB 564\)](#) prohibits municipalities from capping road lengths or the number of lots on dead-end roads if proposals meet state fire code requirements and applicable safety standards. It also requires municipalities to allow utility placement in buffer, wetland, or conservation areas through a special exception or conditional use permit. In addition, municipalities may not impose new lot size or building requirements on affected properties beyond those in effect before the law takes effect. **Effective: April 1, 2027. Statute: RSA 674**

**** Recodification of building and fire code.*** [Chapter 318 \(HB 244\)](#) repeals building and fire code related statutes in the Planning and Zoning chapters of the statutory scheme and recodifies them in RSA 155-A, the New Hampshire Building Code Chapter. **Effective: July 1, 2026. Statutes: RSA 155; RSA 155-A; RSA 205-D; RSA 310; RSA 319; RSA 356-A; RSA 672; RSA 673; RSA 674; RSA 675; RSA 676**

*** *Residential development in commercial zones—I.* [Chapter 319 \(HB 1010\)](#)** updates the universal mixed-use zoning mandate passed in 2025 by restoring some local authority. **Effective: July 1, 2026, 12:01 a.m. Statute: RSA 674**

*** *Residential development in commercial zones—II.* [Chapter 329 \(HB 1588\)](#)** exempts residential developments in areas zoned for commercial use from most local zoning regulations, leaving only frontage, setback, and height requirements in place. The law also prohibits municipalities from applying residential-specific zoning standards in commercial zones, requiring residential developments to be regulated in the same manner as commercial projects. In addition, municipalities could be required to pay a property owner's reasonable attorney's fees if a court determines that a proposed residential development in a commercial zone is legal and conforms to applicable requirements. The law also prohibits municipalities from requiring accessory residential parking spaces to be garaged. **Effective: September 13, 2026. (Note: Section 2 of this bill did not take effect due to the passage of Chapter 319, HB 1010). Statute: RSA 674; RSA 162-V**

***Local option innovative housing structures.* [Chapter 330 \(HB 1681\)](#)** establishes a framework for the regulation and approval of innovative housing structures, specifically tiny houses, tiny houses on wheels, and yurts, allowing them to be used as single-family or accessory dwellings, and grants local authority to permit these housing types on individual lots where single-family dwellings are allowed, provided they comply with state laws regarding water supply and wastewater treatment and meet state building codes. **Effective: September 13, 2026. Statutes: RSA 485; RSA 205-C**

***Regional conservation and energy resource planning.* [Chapter 337 \(SB 592\)](#)** updates regional conservation and energy resource planning by integrating habitat strongholds and wildlife corridors into existing frameworks. The law requires local conservation commissions to maintain an inventory of open spaces, specifically including habitat strongholds and wildlife corridors, for informational purposes only, not to be used as the basis for municipal zoning or planning purposes. **Effective: September 13, 2026. Statutes: RSA 36-A; RSA 206; RSA 94**

INFRASTRUCTURE

***Water system projects.* [Chapter 194 \(SB 541\)](#)** reallocates \$5 million from an existing state fund toward the Southern NH Regional Water Interconnection Project-2B. This project addresses MtBE and PFAS contamination, water quality, and water supply needs in Windham, Salem, Hampstead, Atkinson, and Plaistow. The law also includes a \$325,000 appropriation to the Pillsbury Lake Village District. **Effective: July 1, 2026. Statute: None**

***Cybersecurity measures for public water/wastewater facilities.* [Chapter 197 \(SB 589\)](#)** requires public water systems and wastewater treatment facilities to

implement cybersecurity protection programs commensurate with their size and complexity in accordance with rules adopted by the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES). Exemptions are provided for systems not using Internet-connected control systems. For information on current cybersecurity standards and best practices for public water/wastewater facilities and the availability of grants for cybersecurity upgrades, NHMA suggests members reach out to NHDES, the Overwatch Foundation, or their property/casualty insurance carrier. **Effective: June 19, 2026. Statute: RSA 485**

Update to 10 Year Plan. [Chapter 343 \(HB 2026\)](#) updates the state 10-year Transportation Improvement Plan and increases toll rates for out-of-state drivers, which will be used to fund additional road and bridge projects across the state. **Effective: Section 4 effective December 1, 2026; Sections 3 & 5 effective January 1, 2027; Remainder effective August 19, 2026. Statute: None.**

LOCAL AUTHORITY AND RELATED ITEMS

Solid waste district reimbursements. [Chapter 42 \(SB 593\)](#) fixes a loophole in the solid waste surcharge enacted in 2025 that inadvertently left solid waste districts out of the state's rebate process for municipalities. **Effective: May 8, 2026. Statute: RSA 149-R**

Objections to wage claims. [Chapter 50 \(HB 1168\)](#) extends the time frame for employers to file objections to a wage claim from 10 days to 20 days after receiving notice of the claim. **Effective: July 7, 2026. Statute: RSA 275**

Carbon sequestration. [Chapter 51 \(HB 1205\)](#) prohibits state and county owned lands from participating in timber carbon sequestration projects. **Effective: July 7, 2026. Statute: RSA 79**

Repeal of welfare reporting requirement. [Chapter 54 \(SB 401\)](#) repeals an obsolete, unenforced annual reporting requirement by municipal overseers of public welfare to the department of health and human services. **Effective: May 8, 2026. Statute: RSA 41**

**** Notices to municipalities from state agencies.*** [Chapter 67 \(SB 527\)](#) allows state agencies to send required municipal notices by email instead of only by first-class mail, unless a municipality specifically opts out and requests mailed notices. **Effective: July 7, 2026. Statutes: RSA 541-A; RSA 483; RSA 483-B**

Remitting municipal funds to treasurer. [Chapter 71 \(HB 1118\)](#) raises the limit for funds collected by selectmen, tax collectors, and town clerks that must be remitted to the treasurer to \$3,500. **Effective: July 17, 2026. Statutes: RSA 41; RSA 261**

Disbursement of conservation commission funds. [Chapter 72 \(HB 1151\)](#) clarifies that a city or town treasurer shall have custody of all money in a conservation fund and can only disburse these funds upon the order of the conservation commission. The law states that the disbursement of conservation funds requires authorization from a majority of the conservation commission and mandates a public hearing before funds can be used for purchasing real property or contributing to qualified organizations. **Effective: July 17, 2026. Statutes: RSA 36-A; RSA 48**

**** Eligibility for local assistance.*** [Chapter 81 \(HB 348\)](#) allows municipalities to adopt an optional proof of residency requirement as part of their local welfare guidelines. Temporary emergency assistance still must be provided. The law also establishes a process for municipalities to determine financial responsibility should it be questioned. Specifically, should financial responsibility be questioned, a municipality could coordinate with the alleged municipality of residency of the applicant by either seeking reimbursement of costs, requesting that the municipality of residency undertake ongoing relief and maintenance of the applicant pursuant to the municipality of residency's welfare guidelines, or request an intermunicipal hearing to determine residency and financial responsibility of the applicant. The law also creates exceptions to any residency requirements for an individual who is the victim of domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault or human trafficking. **Effective: July 21, 2026. Statute: RSA 165**

Animal Cruelty hearings. [Chapter 143 \(SB 619\)](#) establishes new procedures for expedited court hearings regarding animals that have been confiscated due to allegations of animal cruelty. **Effective: January 1, 2027. Statute: RSA 644**

Derry school governance. [Chapter 165 \(HB 1331\)](#) enables the Derry Town Council to incorporate the Derry Cooperative School District as a department of the town through a charter amendment. **Effective: June 19, 2026. Statute: RSA 49-B**

School withdrawals and closures. [Chapter 303 \(HB 1374\)](#) modifies the procedures for withdrawal from cooperative school districts. The law also modifies the procedures for the closure of elementary and high schools. **Effective: October 8, 2026. Statutes: RSA 195; RSA 195-A; RSA 194-C; RSA 194**

**** Public employee suspensions.*** [Chapter 321 \(HB 1109\)](#) establishes notice requirements regarding public employee suspensions and investigations. The law applies to all public employees unless the public employee is employed under a collective bargaining agreement negotiated pursuant to RSA 273-A, and that agreement establishes procedures related to disciplinary actions including suspension. **Effective: January 1, 2027. Statute: RSA 275**

TOWN CLERKS/TAX COLLECTORS

Fetal death records. [Chapter 2 \(SB 189\)](#) updates the statute relative to fetal death records. **Effective: June 6, 2026. Statute: RSA 5-C**

Video lottery operations. [Chapter 16 \(SB 83\)](#) amends existing laws regarding video lottery terminals and game operators by removing the previous cap on the amount of free play that could be deducted from gross video lottery revenue and updates the definitions of primary and secondary game operators. **Effective: May 26, 2026. Statutes: RSA 287-J; RSA 284; RSA 287-D**

Marriage licenses. [Chapter 29 \(HB 1260\)](#) amends marriage registration laws to allow marriage applicants to complete the marriage application in advance, establishes a fee for filing a delayed marriage certificate, and updates all relevant statutory language in the chapter to be gender neutral. **Effective: September 8, 2026. Statute: RSA 5-C**

Dog license fees. [Chapter 84 \(HB 1274\)](#) increases the annual fee for dog licenses by 25 cents. **Effective: July 1, 2026. Statute: RSA 466**

Registration fees for electric and hybrid vehicles. [Chapter 235 \(HB 1594\)](#) establishes a weight-based tiered registration fee schedule for electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles, replacing the previous flat fee system. **Effective: January 1, 2027. Statute: RSA 261**

ELECTIONS AND TOWN MEETINGS

Number of polling places. [Chapter 7 \(SB 103\)](#) requires towns and cities to provide a minimum of one polling location for every 15,000 registered voters during general elections that include the election for President of the United States. If a town or city wishes to operate a single polling location for more than 15,000 registered voters, it must submit a detailed plan for approval by the secretary of state and the attorney general. **Effective: September 16, 2026. Statute: RSA 658**

ID requirements for voting. [Chapter 20 \(HB 323\)](#) requires the presentation of a government-issued photographic means of identification to vote and reduces the types of acceptable forms of identification. **Effective: June 2, 2026. Statute: RSA 659**

Date of state primary election. [Chapter 44 \(HB 481\)](#) moves the state primary election to the second Tuesday in June beginning in 2028. Municipalities with a July 1 fiscal year are reminded to include the cost of one more election in their 2027-2028 fiscal year budget. **Effective: January 1, 2028. Statutes: RSA 653; RSA 654; RSA 655; RSA 658**

Verifying citizenship of indigent voters. [Chapter 68 \(HB 365\)](#) establishes a new procedure for verifying the citizenship of voters who lack documentary proof of citizenship. It allows local election officials and the secretary of state to confirm a voter's

citizenship through available databases if the voter requests assistance. Additionally, if a voter claims indigency and cannot provide documentation, the local clerk or secretary of state may issue a voucher to cover the cost of obtaining a birth certificate or equivalent proof of citizenship, with the responsibility placed on the voter to obtain the necessary documentation by election day. **Effective: July 17, 2026. Statute: RSA 654**

Terms for town moderator. [Chapter 70 \(HB 1113\)](#) allows towns to establish a 3-year term for town moderators. **Effective: July 17, 2026. Statutes: RSA 40; RSA 671**

**** Intent and effect of warrant articles.*** [Chapter 92 \(HB 1309\)](#) requires the “intent and effect” of each warrant article to be stated clearly and without “commentary or ambiguity,” but provides no definitions of these terms. **Effective: July 27, 2026. Statute: RSA 39**

Correcting voter checklist. [Chapter 93 \(HB 1325\)](#) allows supervisors of the checklist to hold meetings for correcting the checklist on any day of the week, rather than being restricted to Saturdays, as previously mandated. **Effective: May 28, 2026. Statute: RSA 669**

Access to designated vote-counting area. [Chapter 161 \(HB 1266\)](#) allows election moderators access to the area designated for counting votes during the performance of their duties, even if they are on the ballot. **Effective: August 18, 2026. Statute: RSA 659**

Determination of Default Budget. [Chapter 149 \(HB 1575\)](#) transfers the determination of the default budget to the budget committee. Under previous law, the governing body prepared the default budget unless the legislative body voted to delegate the preparation of the default budget to the budget committee. **Effective: August 11, 2026. Statutes: RSA 40; RSA 32**

Disposal of electronic ballot counting external storage devices. [Chapter 162 \(HB 1298\)](#) requires external memory devices used in electronic ballot counting to be disposed of in the same manner as ballots, absentee ballot applications, affidavit envelopes, and lists. **Effective: August 18, 2026. Statute: RSA 33-A**

Voter identification. [Chapter 243 \(SB 223\)](#) reduces the types of acceptable forms of identification that may be used for the purpose of obtaining a ballot. **Effective: August 31, 2026. Statute: RSA 659**

Voter registration database access. [Chapter 249 \(SB 438\)](#) requires the secretary of state to collaborate with local clerks to ensure that the statewide centralized voter registration database is accessible at all polling places during election days. **Effective: July 30, 2026. Statutes: RSA 654; RSA 260**

Sortable voter checklists. [Chapter 283 \(HB 281\)](#) requiring electronic voter checklists be provided in a sortable format, specifically as a spreadsheet or comma-separated values (CSV) file. **Effective: September 8, 2026. Statute: RSA 657**

*** *Verification of a voter's identity.*** [Chapter 284 \(HB 317\)](#) allows a supervisor of the checklist, along with moderators, clerks, or selectmen, to verify a voter's identity if they personally know the voter by filling out an attestation form. The law also allows residents of nursing homes or similar facilities to prove their identity through verification by the facility's administrator or designee. **Effective: September 8, 2026. Statute: RSA 654**

*** *Definition of electioneering.*** [Chapter 285 \(HB 340\)](#) updates the statute regarding electioneering by public employees to create a civil fine of up to \$1,000 for any public employee who posts or distributes a card, handbill, poster, placard, picture, pin, sticker, circular, or any other form of communication that a "reasonable person" would believe explicitly advocates for or against any candidate, political party, or measure and defines political surveys as those that show a clear preference for policies likely to appear on a ballot or in an election. **Effective: January 1, 2026. Statutes: RSA 659; RSA 652**

Citizenship audits. [Chapter 289 \(HB 1062\)](#) authorizes the secretary of state to conduct random audits of the citizenship qualification of registered voters. **Effective: September 8, 2026. Statute: RSA 654**

Filing for House special election. [Chapter 293 \(HB 1187\)](#) requires the town clerk to post contact information for election officials authorized to accept the declaration of candidacy during the filing period for a special election for state representative. **Effective: September 8, 2026. Statute: RSA 655**

Incompatibility of office. [Chapter 295 \(HB 1234\)](#) establishes regulations regarding the eligibility and candidacy for various school district and some municipal offices, specifically prohibiting individuals from simultaneously holding multiple incompatible positions. **Effective: September 8, 2026. Statute: RSA 671**

Absentee ballots. [Chapter 299 \(HB 1306\)](#) creates an absentee ballot certificate and requires certain counts of absentee ballots to be performed by the clerk and recorded on the absentee ballot certificate. **Effective: September 8, 2026. Statutes: RSA 657; RSA 658**

Statewide school tax cap referendum. [Chapter 324 \(HB 1300\)](#) establishes a school district local tax cap question for the state general elections of 2026 and 2028 and related limitations on central office administrative expenses in school districts. The legislation creates significant logistical and applicability questions in municipalities in which the school district is a city department. The [NH School Boards Association](#)

plans to issue guidance on this law; the secretary of state and/or the attorney general also may issue guidance. **Effective: September 1, 2026 (prospective repeal, January 1, 2032). Statute(s): RSA 21-J; RSA 32:5**

Secure ballot containers. [Chapter 327 \(HB 1541\)](#) requires the secretary of state to provide all voting precincts with secure containers for storing ballots for state and federal elections. **Effective: January 1, 2027. Statute: RSA 659**

* ***Posting of town meeting warrants.*** [Chapter 341 \(HB 1369\)](#) updates the requirements for posting the warrant for annual and special town meetings. Special meetings may now be posted using at least two of three specified methods: publishing in a local newspaper at least 7 days prior, posting at the meeting location and another public place at least 14 days prior, or posting on the town's Internet website at least 14 days before the meeting. Annual meeting warrants must be posted at the meeting place, another public location, and on the town's Internet website if available, all at least 14 days before the meeting; if the warrant is posted online, it must be prominently featured on the home page. **Effective: October 18, 2026. Statute(s): RSA 39:4; RSA 39:5**

ASSESSING/PROPERTY TAXES/EXEMPTIONS

Optional veterans' tax credits. [Chapter 96 \(HB 1494\)](#) increases the maximum amount of the optional veterans' tax credit, optional combat service tax credit, and optional surviving spouse tax credit. **Effective: April 1, 2027. Statute: RSA 72**

Low-income housing tax credit. [Chapter 207 \(HB 1021\)](#) amends the date to provide written notice to a municipality of a taxpayer's election to be assessed under the low-income housing tax credit program from "by October 1 preceding the tax year for which the election is sought" to "on or before April 15." **Effective: January 1, 2027. Statute: RSA 75**

Recurring tax exemptions. [Chapter 240 \(HB 1756\)](#) allows eligible organizations to file for property tax exemptions once and receive those exemptions unless and until a town assessor finds the organization ineligible for an exemption. **Effective: August 31, 2026. Statute: RSA 72**

* ***Modifying the definition of veteran.*** [Chapter 252 \(SB 448\)](#) amends several statutes to ensure that individuals discharged from military service under honorable conditions, including those with a general discharge under honorable conditions, are included in the definition of the term "veteran." The change applies to the broader definition of the term "veteran" for taxation purposes. **Effective: August 31, 2026. Statutes: RSA 119; RSA 283; RSA 97; RSA 110**

PUBLIC SAFETY/CRIMINAL JUSTICE

License plate scanning. [Chapter 88 \(HB 1059\)](#) eliminates the prospective repeal of the statutes regulating the use of number plate scanning devices. **Effective: May 28, 2026. Statutes: RSA 259; RSA 261**

Digital currency scams. [Chapter 187 \(SB 482\)](#) creates a new chapter—RSA 358-U Digital Asset Transaction Kiosks—in New Hampshire’s legal framework, establishing consumer protections for users of these devices. **Effective: December 16, 2026. Statute: RSA 358-U**

Disclosure of utility customer data. [Chapter 234 \(HB 1577\)](#) authorizes utility service providers to share individual customer data with authorized public safety officials from municipalities for the purpose of emergency coordination, provided that reasonable security measures to protect personal information from unauthorized access and use are in place. **Effective: August 31, 2026. Statute: RSA 363**

EAP expansion. [Chapter 239 \(HB 1705\)](#) establishes an employee assistance program for small town and volunteer first responders. **Effective: July 1, 2027. Statutes: RSA 6:12; RSA 281-A**

First-responder PTSD commission. [Chapter 247 \(SB 423\)](#) reestablishes the Commission to Study the Incidence of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in First Responders, which had sun-setted in 2025. **Effective: July 2, 2026 (except Section 2, effective November 1, 2027). Statute: RSA 281-A**

Communication district audits. [Chapter 271 \(SB 585\)](#) updates the law regarding audits for communications districts by introducing an exception to the requirement for hiring an outside accountant to conduct financial audits if the governing board petitions the state Department of Revenue Administration (DRA) and demonstrates that the district’s annual revenue or expenses were less than \$50,000. Additionally, the district must have an agreement stating that it is not a tax authority and prohibits raising revenue from member municipalities except through voluntary contributions or contractual agreements. **Effective: August 31, 2026. Statute: RSA 53-G**

Pistol permits. [Chapter 325 \(HB 1365\)](#) updates the application form for licenses to carry a loaded pistol or revolver. **Effective: January 1, 2027. Statute: RSA 159**

**** No Trespass Orders.*** [Chapter 339 \(HB 1184\)](#) regulates the issuance of no trespass orders (NTOs) on municipal or school district property, allowing an emergency NTO to be issued for no more than 35 days, which can be extended for up to one year by a majority vote of the governing body. It also allows for an individual to appeal the NTO to the governing body within 10 days. Finally, the bill requires all existing NTOs to be reviewed within 90 days of passage and reissued or rescinded. **Effective: Section 3 effective August 19, 2027; remainder effective October 18, 2026. Statute: RSA 635**

RIGHT-TO-KNOW LAW

Record retention website. [Chapter 206 \(HB 164\)](#) authorizes the state to create and maintain a website for electronic records and allows municipalities to store electronic records on the website. **Effective: August 31, 2026. Statutes: RSA 5; RSA 33-A; RSA 91-A**

ENVIRONMENT/ENERGY

Wastewater plans and projects. [Chapter 62 \(SB 443\)](#) amends existing laws related to wastewater engineering and the responsibilities of the Department of Environmental Services. **Effective: July 7, 2026. Statute: RSA 485-A**

Definition of hazardous waste. [Chapter 120 \(HB 1192\)](#) exempts certain household pharmaceutical wastes from the definition of hazardous waste. **Effective: August 4, 2026. Statutes: RSA 147-B; RSA 147-C; RSA 147-D**

Reconciliation of default electric service rates. [Chapter 147 \(HB 1733\)](#) prohibits utilities from recovering costs associated with default electric service through non-bypassable charges, except in extraordinary circumstances as determined by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) through an adjudicative proceeding. **Effective: June 16, 2026. Statute: 374-F**

Electric aggregation plans. [Chapter 198 \(SB 590\)](#) amends existing law to authorize municipalities to utilize revolving funds specifically for supporting energy services as outlined in approved electric aggregation plans. **Effective: August 18, 2026. Statute: RSA 31**

Utility terrain vehicles. [Chapter 211 \(HB 1095\)](#) amends the definition and weight restrictions for utility terrain vehicles (UTVs), increasing the maximum unladen dry weight of UTVs from 2,000 pounds to 3,499 pounds, and updates the definition of UTV to include various types of vehicles such as side-by-sides, ROVs, and buggies. **Effective: May 1, 2028. Statute: RSA 215**

**** Energy efficient and clean energy districts.*** [Chapter 250 \(SB 440\)](#) updates the statute governing the adoption, rescission, or prohibition of energy efficient and clean energy districts by municipalities and allows for the creation of these districts in unincorporated places by county commissioners. **Effective: July 2, 2026. Statute: RSA 53-F**

“Plug-in” solar systems. [Chapter 262 \(SB 540\)](#) allows electricity consumers to install one plug-in solar generation system with a maximum inverter output of 1,200 watts AC. The law exempts compliant systems from utility approval, interconnection reviews, and related fees, provided they meet national safety standards and are installed according to the state building code and manufacturer instructions. **Effective: January**

1, 2027; except Section 3, contingent on NH Department of Energy certification. Statute: RSA 362-A

Landfill siting. [Chapter 288 \(HB 707\)](#) establishes a seven-member committee to evaluate proposals for new landfills and landfill expansions in the state, assessing proposals under broader criteria than what was considered under previous law and rules. The law pauses proposals for additional landfill capacity until at least July 1, 2027, or until the site evaluation committee has adopted new rules, whichever is later. The state Department of Environmental Services (DES) retains its current authority to determine need, capacity, and compliance, while the new committee would evaluate applications on their merits and approve or deny projects with conditions. The law does not specifically preempt local zoning ordinances, as many previous legislative proposals had done. It also does not override existing legal agreements between towns and private entities. **Effective: September 8, 2026. Statutes: RSA 149-M; RSA 6:12**

*** *Mining regulations.*** [Chapter 292 \(HB 1141\)](#) shifts the state permitting and fee authority for mines and prospecting from the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNRC) to the Department of Environmental Services (DES) and updates the statute. **Effective: July 10, 2026 (except Sections, 9-12, effective July 10, 2028). Statutes: RSA 485-A; RSA 227-C; RSA 0:12; RSA 155-E; RSA 483**

*** *Extending municipal net metering eligibility.*** [Chapter 315 \(SB 538\)](#) establishes an extended eligibility term for municipal group net metering projects. A qualifying municipal group net metering project remains eligible for the longer of 20 years from the first year in which the project first receives net metering compensation, or until January 1, 2040. **Effective: September 8, 2026. Statute: RSA 362-A**

PUBLIC HEALTH

Syringe service programs. [Chapter 106 \(SB 549\)](#) requires syringe service program entities to provide options for disposal of used syringes and needles and creates reporting requirements for such entities. **Effective: August 26, 2026. Statute: RSA 318**

Community water systems. [Chapter 155 \(HB 1089\)](#) Extends the authority of the Department of Environmental Services to evaluate and mitigate contamination risks associated with new community water systems. Specifically, it requires the department to adopt rules that ensure groundwater withdrawals of less than 57,600 gallons over any 24-hour period from new water sources do not negatively impact existing private water supply wells. **Effective: August 18, 2026. Statute: RSA 485-C**

Homestead food products. [Chapter 246 \(SB 418\)](#) prohibits municipalities from requiring licenses, restrictions, or exclusions for the production and sale of homestead food products. **Effective: July 2, 2026. Statute: RSA 147**

OTHER

NH-harvested spruce-pine-fir lumber. [Chapter 77 \(SB 503\)](#) promotes the use of New Hampshire-grown spruce-pine-fir (SPF) lumber by amending the state building code to include spruce-pine-fir-south (SPFS) lumber as an equivalent alternative to Canadian SPF lumber. **Note:** This chapter replaces [Chapter 32 \(HB 1204\)](#), also signed in 2026 and effective October 19, 2026. **Effective: November 14, 2026. Statute: RSA 155-A:15**

“Blockchain Basic Laws.” [Chapter 286 \(HB 639\)](#) creates a new chapter—RSA 359-V Blockchain Basic Laws—in New Hampshire’s legal framework. The law prohibits state and local government agencies from restricting the use of digital assets for purchasing goods and services. Other key provisions include definitions of blockchain-related terms, the establishment of a “Blockchain Dispute Docket” within the superior court system to handle disputes related to blockchain technology, and new legal protections for individuals and businesses involved in blockchain activities, such as digital asset mining and operating nodes. **Effective: September 8, 2026. Statute: RSA 359-V**

Licensing massage establishments. [Chapter 305 \(HB 1469\)](#) requires massage establishments to be licensed and regulated by the office of professional licensure and certification (OPLC). **Effective: July 1, 2027. Statutes: RSA 328-B; RSA 328-H**

Cannabis cultivation. [Chapter 344 \(SB 468\)](#) enables alternative treatment cannabis centers to operate a greenhouse cultivation location. The law mandates that alternative treatment centers submit detailed proposals to the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) when seeking authorization for greenhouse cultivation, which must include plans for cost reduction and pricing strategies for patients. DHHS is directed to adopt rules to regulate these greenhouse operations, including application processes, security measures, and compliance with local zoning laws. Additionally, the bill requires DHHS to solicit input from municipalities and to report on the impacts of greenhouse cultivation in annual reports. **Effective: August 19, 2026. Statute: RSA 126-X**

Vetoed Bills

The governor vetoed the following bills with municipal impacts. The House and Senate met on August 19 to address the vetoes; none of the bills below met the two-thirds majority needed to overturn the veto.

- **HB 221:** Enabling electric utilities to own, operate, and offer advanced nuclear resources, and relative to purchased power agreements for electric distribution utilities and limitations on community customer generators.
- **HB 451:** Establishing the paint product stewardship program.
- **HB 1491:** Relative to pooled risk management programs.

- **HB 1726:** Relative to the sale of surplus state-owned land and establishing a commission to study the sale of state-owned property.
- **SB 627:** Relative to toll rate adjustments and periodic inflation-based toll reviews for the New Hampshire turnpike system to support the 2027-2036 ten-year transportation plan.
- **SB 661:** Relative to pooled risk management programs.

Note: The House and Senate voted to override the following bills with municipal impact: **HB 1184, HB 1369, HB 2026, SB 468.**

Holding the Line

Here are just a few proposals negatively impacting cities and towns that failed to advance in 2026 due to the advocacy of NHMA and its members:

- Broad expansion of municipal liability defeated.
- Flawed data center mandate tabled.
- No changes to meals and rooms tax local distribution formula.
- No automatic tax cap referendums or restrictions on bonding for cities and towns.
- Onerous incompatibility of office bill that would make it harder for small towns to fill vacancies was killed.
- Pair of bills taking aim at NHMA's ability to advocate and member municipalities' ability to govern the organization died in the House; a similar bill held over from 2025 was also killed.

2027 on the Horizon

With the election coming up this fall, the makeup of the legislature is uncertain. If history is any guide, there will likely be 100 new legislators in 2027. Next year opens a new biennium and, with it, the next state budget cycle — historically the session where the largest fiscal decisions affecting municipal aid are made.

As a nonpartisan, member-led organization, NHMA is dedicated to ensuring that the partnership between the legislature and our 234 communities is as productive as possible. While each community is unique, they share common experiences and impacts from state policy. We amplify the collective voice and experience of New Hampshire's cities and towns, serving as a bridge between local knowledge and state-level policy to ensure municipalities have a voice in shaping informed, effective, and sustainable state-level decisions.

Members are encouraged to [reach out](#) to NHMA's Advocacy Team with questions about specific new laws or concerns to raise heading into the 2027 session.

Here are some things you can do now and next year about legislation that impacts your city or town:

Speak	Speak to your local legislators by phone or in person.
Invite	Invite your local legislators to a select board, council, or aldermen meeting.
Tell	Tell your constituents about important bills and explain their impact.
Write	Write a letter or a commentary to send to local media outlets.
Share	Share your concerns about specific bills or issues with the Governor's office.
Talk	Talk to NHMA to get additional background on these bills.
Attend	Attend the public hearings on bills important to your municipality and sign up to testify.

Here are some key legislative dates this fall and winter:

House

- **Friday, September 11:** Last day prior to the General Election for incumbents running for re-election to file Legislative Service Requests (LSRs) with complete information.
- **Friday, October 23:** Last day to file 2026 Interim Study reports.
- **Tuesday, November 3:** Election Day.
- **Wednesday, November 4:** First day for all Representatives to file LSRs with complete information.
- **Wednesday, November 18:** Last day to file LSRs with complete information (4:00 p.m.); Ten-day signoff period begins.
- **Tuesday, January 5, 2027:** Last day to sign-off on all LSRs (4:00 p.m.).
- **Friday, January 15, 2027:** Last day to introduce House Bills. Last day to amend House Rules by majority vote.

Senate

- **Monday, September 21:** First day for incumbents seeking re-election to file LSRs with complete information.
- **Friday, September 25:** Last day for incumbents seeking re-election to file LSRs with complete information (4:00 p.m.).
- **Tuesday, November 3:** Election Day.
- **Wednesday, November 4:** First day for Senators to file Legislative Service Requests (LSRs) with complete information.

- **Wednesday, November 18:** Last day for the Office Legislative Services to accept drafting requests for Senate Bills, Senate Concurrent Resolutions, and Senate Joint Resolutions with complete information for the 2027 Senate Session (4:00 p.m.).
- **Friday, December 18:** Last day for prime sponsors to sign off on legislation (4:00 p.m.).

Each chamber will set 2027 legislative deadlines on convening day, January 6, 2027.

Stay Engaged: Get the Bulletin!

If you know anyone who may benefit from receiving the weekly NHMA Legislative Bulletin next year, feel free to pass this email along and encourage them to sign up! NHMA members can subscribe to the Bulletin through our member portal at:

<https://nhmunicipal.weblinkconnect.com/portal>

Once you are logged in, click “edit this profile” and “newsletter management.” You also can sign up for the Legislative Bulletin, Newlink, and Town & City magazine at the same time.

Final Word on 2026

Throughout the 2026 session, members’ testimony, emails, letters, and calls helped educate and mobilize legislators to take a deeper look at many bills, leading to improved outcomes for municipalities.

From everyone here at NHMA, thank you again for your input, questions, expertise, and support throughout the legislative session. Your voice truly mattered!

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NHMA Events Calendar

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