

**New Hampshire Municipal Association**

THE SERVICE AND ACTION ARM OF NEW HAMPSHIRE MUNICIPALITIES

# LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

**Legislative Bulletin 12**

**2026 Session**

**March 20, 2026**



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[Bill Hearings Schedule](#)

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## **Crossover Sessions in House, Senate**

The House and Senate will hold crossover sessions on **Thursday, March 26**. Crossover is the legislative deadline when the House sends its passed bills to the Senate and the Senate sends its bills to the House. It's essentially the midpoint of the session, when the final remaining bills move to the other chamber for a new round of scrutiny. Because hundreds of bills were voted on last week, crossover day is fairly light this year and both chambers also will be taking action on some bills that crossed over earlier this year. Here are some bills NHMA is watching:

## Senate

[HB 164](#), on the consent calendar as ought to pass as amended (OTP-A). The bill, **supported** by NHMA, authorizes the state archives to create and maintain a website for the retention and public access of local electronic records and specifies that municipalities may store electronic records on the website.

[HB 173](#), on the consent calendar as refer to interim study. The bill, **opposed** by NHMA, prevents amendments to a petitioned warrant article that eliminate its subject matter or change the purpose of the article.

[HB 348](#), on the consent calendar as ought to pass as amended (OTP-A). The bill, **supported** by NHMA and many local welfare officials, will allow municipalities to adopt an optional proof of residency requirement as part of their local welfare guidelines. Should a municipality adopt proof of residency requirements, the bill will require the municipality to accept certain documentation or an attestation by specific public officials/social service providers to establish residency. Temporary emergency assistance still must be provided, but a municipality would then coordinate with the alleged municipality of residency 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. Finally, the bill requires municipalities to adopt financial standards as part of their local welfare guidelines that are based on local market costs.

[SB 441](#), on the regular calendar as ought to pass as amended (OTP-A), enables municipalities to request a hearing regarding the residency of an assisted person in cases where there is disagreement on which municipality has financial responsibility for local welfare. NHMA **opposes** the bill in favor of **HB 348**, which includes more comprehensive language on this issue. It is likely that this bill will be tabled or killed if **HB 348** passes.

[HB 488](#), on the consent calendar as inexpedient to legislate (ITL). The bill, **opposed** by NHMA, addresses potential municipal conflicts of interest and bans elected officials and municipal employees from concurrently serving in certain positions and roles. Regardless of intent, the bill goes too far and has the potential to hamstring small-town government operations.

[SB 541](#), on the consent calendar as OTP-A. This bill, **supported** by NHMA, amends the capital budget approved last year to enable the state to bond an additional \$5 million for the Southern NH Regional Water Interconnection Project-2B after an additional \$10 million is obtained from other funding sources. This project addresses MtBE and PFAS

contamination, water quality, and water supply needs in Windham, Salem, Hampstead, Atkinson, and Plaistow.

[SB 593](#), on the consent calendar as OTP-A. This bill, originally a landfill-siting bill **opposed** by NHMA, was entirely replaced by an amendment addressing a loophole in the solid waste surcharge enacted last year that inadvertently left solid waste districts out of the state rebate process. The \$3.50 per ton surcharge on all solid waste disposed of at any of the state's six active landfills or its waste-to-energy facility took effect January 1, 2026. The fee is paid by municipalities, businesses, and other entities, but towns and cities receive a 100% quarterly rebate. NHMA supports the amendment but is concerned that the effective date is January 1, 2027.

[SB 661](#) (See risk pool article below.)

## House

[HB 1602](#), on the regular calendar as refer to interim study. The bill, **supported** by NHMA, creates a manufacturer-funded, third-party battery recycling program for specific types of batteries. The goal of the bill is to transfer the burden and costs associated with disposing batteries from municipalities and solid waste districts onto manufacturers. The concept is similar to the paint stewardship program created in **HB 451**, which was approved by the House and Senate and recently vetoed the governor. **HB 1602** was initially recommended as ought to pass (OTP), 13-12, on Tuesday; however, the **House Finance Committee** revisited its vote a few hours later and approved the interim study recommendation.

[HB 1622](#), on the consent calendar as ought to pass (OTP). The bill, **supported** by NHMA, is a landfill-siting bill that—unlike other proposals on this topic—does not give the state the power to override existing municipal agreements with landfill operators.

## Risk Pool Update

A Senate committee this week unanimously approved an amendment to [SB 661](#), dealing with the regulation of risk pools and recommended the bills as OTP-A. **SB 661** is on the consent calendar next Thursday.

Risk pools are created by cities, towns, counties, and school districts to reduce risks and associated insurance costs, shifting risk from an individual political subdivision to the pool. Across the country, two primary types of risk pools exist: assessable and non-assessable. The Association of Governmental Risk Pools (AGRIP) recognizes both models.

**SB 661** introduces assessable risk pools into the NH statutory scheme, which subjects members to potential unbudgeted, mid-year assessments; this actually occurred last summer, when many school districts and a few towns received large “surprise bills” from two of the three health insurance risk pools operating in the state, one of which has since folded. **Under HB 661, assessable pools would be the only model allowed.**

NHMA opposes **SB 661** because it does not properly address all types of risk pools and therefore does not properly address the needs of our members. Simply put, it will add uncertainty to municipal budgeting and change the terms of existing risk pool membership for some municipalities.

**HB 1491**, a bill **supported** by NHMA, passed the House last week. The bill introduces assessable risk pools into the statutory scheme, but as an *alternative* to non-assessable risk pools. Allowing both models provides clarity to local governments, helping them decide which model, if any, best suits their needs. Assessable pools would remain under the authority of the Secretary of State, while non-assessable pools will shift oversight to the Department of Insurance (DOI).

If your community has been impacted by assessments or is concerned that the current version of **SB 661** enshrines assessments in statute for all risk pools, **reach out** to your **local Senator** to share your concerns.

NHMA supports the ability of members to establish and govern the pools and understands that clear regulations that protect the members and allow the pools to operate are necessary. With health insurance being a huge driver of municipal costs, regularly outpacing inflation, providing legislative clarity is crucial. It is important to keep in mind that the stability of healthcare risk pools is tied to the future stability of healthcare for thousands of public employees in our state.

## **Upcoming Senate Hearings on Municipal Bills**

The Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee will hold public hearings on multiple bills next **Tuesday, March 24, in State House (SH) Room 122-123:**

**HB 1161** (9:15 a.m.), removing the requirement for municipalities to have an advisory board for development districts. NHMA **supports** this bill.

**HB 1066** (9:35 a.m.), relative to warrant articles authorizing lease agreements. NHMA **opposes** this bill, although the current amended version is a significant improvement over the bill as introduced.

[HB 1113](#) (9:45 a.m.), enabling towns to establish a 3-year term for town moderators. NHMA **supports** this bill.

[HB 1137](#) (9:55 a.m.), making the representative of the governing body on the municipal budget committee an ex-officio, non-voting member. NHMA **opposes** this bill.

For detailed instructions on ways to share your position on these and any other bills, see “*How to Make Your Voice Heard*” below.

## Legislative Policy Proposals Welcome

NHMA has a member-driven process by which it establishes the legislative policy positions to guide staff advocacy activities over the coming legislative biennium.

If there is a law affecting municipal government that you think needs to be fixed, or if you have an idea for how the functions of local government might be improved with legislation, this is **your opportunity to propose a change**. To share your proposal, complete this [Legislative Policy Proposal Form](#). Include a brief (one or two sentence) policy statement, a statement about the municipal interest served by the proposal and an explanation that describes the nature of the problem or concern from a municipal perspective and discusses the proposed action that is being advocated to address the problem. Mail to NHMA, 25 Triangle Park Drive, Concord, NH 03301; or e-mail to [governmentaffairs@nhmunicipal.org](mailto:governmentaffairs@nhmunicipal.org) no later than the close of business on **April 17, 2026**.

Learn more about NHMA’s 2027-2028 Legislative Policy Process in this [Questions and Answers fact sheet](#).

## How to Make your Voice Heard

If a bill is of importance to your municipality, it’s always best to make your case – for or against – in person. Every Friday, NHMA posts a [Bill Hearings Schedule](#) for the upcoming week. However, if you can’t make it to Concord, you can use the Legislature’s online portal to put your position on the hearing record.

The House has an [online testimony submission system](#) that allows you to indicate your position on the bill with an option to attach testimony. If you want to email all the members of a House committee, you will have to copy their email addresses individually from the [committee page](#).

The Senate has [a remote sign-in sheet](#) where you can indicate whether you are supportive of a bill, opposed, or neutral. Written testimony can be submitted via the “Email Entire Committee” link found on the [Senate committee page](#).

If you have time to follow along, livestreams of [House](#) and [Senate](#) sessions and committee meetings are available on YouTube. Prior sessions and committee meetings are also archived.

Finally, if you just want to contact your local legislators, there are [Contact a Senator](#) and [Contact a Representative](#) links on the [General Court](#) website.

**Note:** For any readers who print these emails out, all of the above links can be found on the General Court website at: <https://gc.nh.gov/>

## **Follow Bills That Matter to You Online**

In addition to our weekly Legislative Bulletin, NHMA provides members access to FastDemocracy, an online bill tracking platform, for efficient, real-time updates to legislative activity of interest to members. Visit our online [Bill Tracker](#) page to learn more and feel free to subscribe to weekly or daily updates on subjects and bills of interest.

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### **NHMA Events Calendar** **2025 Final Legislative Bulletin**

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