

New Hampshire Municipal Association

THE SERVICE AND ACTION ARM OF NEW HAMPSHIRE MUNICIPALITIES

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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HB 1064 Will Increase Municipal Costs

On **Thursday, April 2, at 1:00 p.m., in State House (SH) Room 100**, the [Senate Judiciary Committee](#) will hold a public hearing on [HB 1064](#), a bill **opposed** by NHMA that expands municipal liability, increases damage caps, and mandates indemnification of employees.

Please attend this hearing to share your concerns about this bill; if that's not possible, [sign in](#) to oppose the bill or [contact members](#) of the committee. For detailed instructions on ways to share your position on these and any other bills, see "*How to Make Your Voice Heard*" below.

While intended to expand liability and improve compensation for injured parties, **HB 1064 goes too far and creates serious financial risks for municipalities.** Significantly raising liability caps will increase insurance and risk pool costs, which will lead to a combination of property tax increases and reductions in municipal services.

Also, **HB 1064** limits a municipality's ability to claim immunity as a defense in negligence claims, meaning municipalities will have greater financial exposure. **Small communities will be disproportionately impacted**, as a single large claim could force cuts to public safety, roads, or education. Further, mandatory indemnification removes important local discretion and weakens accountability.

[And More Legal Exposure for Municipalities](#)

On **Thursday, April 2, at 1:40 p.m., in State House (SH) Room 100**, the **[Senate Judiciary Committee](#)** will hold a public hearing on **[HB 1788](#)**, which prohibits the state and political subdivisions from entering into or renewing any contract that includes diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI)-related provisions, including requirements for contractors to implement DEI programs, conduct DEI training, or comply with DEI-related reporting obligations and require contracts to be void if they contain such language. The bill is similar to language included in the state budget last year that is on hold pending the outcome of a lawsuit filed in federal court. **NHMA opposes HB 1788** due to the potential cost issues.

HB 1788 also empowers any "citizen" to bring a cause of action against **any public entity, state agency, or political subdivision** if they believe the law has been violated.

If you are coming to Concord for **HB 1064** (above), please **attend this hearing to share your concerns about HB 1788; if not, [sign in](#) to oppose the bill or [contact members](#) of the committee.**

[Hearings on Multiple Election-Related Bills](#)

The **[Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee](#)** will hold public hearings on multiple bills on **Tuesday, March 31, in State House (SH) Room 122-123.**

The two most concerning bills are:

[HB 1131](#) (1:00 p.m. hearing), opposed by NHMA, changes the process for adopting the official ballot referendum form of meeting (usually called “SB 2”) by placing the question on the official ballot for electing officers. Currently, the question would be placed on the warrant at the traditional town meeting and debated like any other matter of business to be acted upon. The current process provides a vital forum for open debate on the question, which is especially valuable when voters are considering a significant change to a municipality’s form of government.

[HB 686](#) (1:45 p.m.), opposed by NHMA, expands the definition of electioneering by prohibiting a public body or public employee acting in an official capacity from conducting or sponsoring surveys, polls, or questionnaires concerning candidates, political parties, ballot measures, or policies reasonably anticipated to be submitted to voters. In other words, a municipality would not be able to gather information from the public concerning ballot measures or any topic that could become a ballot measure. This prevents much needed information gathered by public employees and public bodies about community issues.

We’re asking municipalities impacted by either or both of these bills to testify against these bills, or [sign in online](#) in opposition.

Other election-related bills being heard throughout the day on which NHMA has a position include:

- **[HB 1541](#)** (9:00 a.m.), requiring the secretary of state to provide all voting precincts with secure containers for storing ballots. (**Support**)
- **[HB 1309](#)** (10:15 a.m.), relative to town meeting warrants. (**Oppose**)
- **[HB 1076](#)** (10:45 a.m.), relative to authorizing or rescinding the use of electronic ballot counting devices. (**Oppose**)
- **[HB 1187](#)** (1:15 p.m.), relative to the time in which candidates for state representative may file their candidacy for a special election. (**Oppose**)
- **[HB 1272](#)** (1:30 p.m.), providing an option for each candidate's party affiliations to be printed on the town or school district ballot. (**Oppose**)

The same committee meets again on **Wednesday, April 1, in SH Room 103** to hear three more bills:

- **[HB 1266](#)** (1:00 p.m.), allowing election moderators access to the area designated for counting votes during the performance of their duties. (**Support**)
- **[HB 1306](#)** (1:45 p.m.), relative to the counting of absentee ballots. (**Oppose**)
- **[HB 1325](#)** (2:00 p.m.), enabling supervisors of the checklist to correct the checklist on any day of the week. (**Support**)

Crossover Day in House, Senate

The House and Senate held crossover sessions on Thursday. Crossover is the legislative deadline when the House must send its final 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.

For municipalities, crossover is an inflection point. Priorities that had strong early momentum may stall. Amendments that seemingly come from nowhere may catch fire. And the window to influence outcomes is narrowing fast.

Once a bill crosses over, it enters a new committee in the other chamber, often with different priorities, different constituencies, and a different appetite for amendments. Municipal officials who haven't yet weighed in should do so when hearings are scheduled on these bills. It's the best way to make sure the local voices are helping to share the conversations. [Click here](#) to learn more about what crossover means for NHMA and its member municipalities.

Here are updates on some key bills NHMA has been following that were voted on in the crossover sessions:

Senate

[HB 164](#) was **passed** with amendment. 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. Because the bill was amended, it will return to the House.

[HB 173](#) was referred 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](#) was **passed** with amendment. 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. 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. Because the bill was amended, it will return to the House.

[SB 441](#) passed with a floor amendment. The bill, **opposed** by NHMA, requires a municipality that intends to transport a homeless individual or other person showing symptoms of addiction or incapacitation from substance use unrelated to an application for general assistance to another municipality for the purpose of receiving housing, shelter, addiction treatment, or related services to have in place a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the receiving municipality. A \$5,000 fine will be assessed by DHHS on the sending municipality for a transfer to a municipality without an MOU. The state is charged with adopting rules regarding transportation of individuals covered in this bill. The bill will go to the House.

[HB 488](#) was killed. 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 593](#) was passed with amendment. This bill, **supported** by NHMA, addresses a loophole in the solid waste surcharge enacted last year that inadvertently left solid waste districts out of the state rebate process. NHMA remains concerned that the effective date is January 1, 2027. The bill will go to the House.

[SB 661](#) was passed with amendment. The bill, **opposed** by NHMA, introduces assessable risk pools into the NH statutory scheme, which subjects members to potential unbudgeted, mid-year assessments. Under **SB 661**, assessable pools would be the only model allowed. NHMA opposes the bill because it does not properly address all types of risk pools and therefore does not properly address the needs of our members and adds uncertainty to municipal budgeting. The bill will go to the House.

House

[HB 1602](#) passed with amendment. The bill, **supported** by NHMA, creates a manufacturer-funded, third-party battery recycling program for specific types of batteries. The goal is to transfer the burden and costs associated with disposing batteries from municipalities and solid waste districts onto manufacturers. The bill will go to the Senate.

[HB 1622](#) was passed. 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. The bill will be sent to the Senate.

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 advocacy@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.

New Email Address!

There is a new email address to contact NHMA's legislative advocacy team: advocacy@nhmunicipal.org

The address was created to better reflect the work of the team. Messages sent to the government affairs email will be forwarded to the new mailbox for the foreseeable future, but please update your contacts now.

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NHMA Events Calendar **2025 Final Legislative Bulletin**

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