

New Hampshire Municipal Association

THE SERVICE AND ACTION ARM OF NEW HAMPSHIRE MUNICIPALITIES

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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2025 Session

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[Live Bill Tracker](#)

Legislative Session Enters Final Stage

Thursday was the deadline for the House and Senate to act on bills amended by the other chamber. The options were to either concur with the amended bill (meaning it will be sent to the governor), **non-concur** (meaning the bill dies, although it could be brought back next year), or **non-concur and request a committee of conference** (meaning members of the House and Senate will meet to seek a compromise). Any committee of conference agreement requires all conferees to sign onto the proposal; it then returns to the House and Senate for an up-or-down vote, meaning lawmakers at that final meeting are unable to amend it in any fashion.

A list of committees of conference is [available here](#). Please check the committee page or each bill's docket on the [General Court](#) website for information about committee members and meetings. Be aware that meetings are often recessed and rescheduled on short notice, so the website may not always have the most current information. Committee meetings are livestreamed and archived on the [House](#) or [Senate](#) YouTube pages (HBs on House page, SBs on Senate page.)

Thursday, June 19 is the deadline to sign committee of conference reports and **Thursday, June 26** is the deadline to act on all committee of conference reports.

Budget Goes to Committee of Conference

Nor surprisingly, the two-year state budget, [HB 1](#) and [HB 2](#), was among the bills for which the House requested a committee of conference. The spending plan adopted by the Senate, which had more updated revenue data and projections to work from, spends about \$400 million more than the House budget adopted in early April. Both budgets are lower than the governor's initial proposal, but the Senate budget is much closer. The Legislative Budget Assistant Office has prepared a side-by-side comparison of the House and Senate version of **HB 2**, which is [available here](#). NHMA has sent a letter to members of the committee of conference with comments on specific issues impacting municipalities. You can [read the letter here](#).

The state fiscal year begins July 1, so a budget must be finalized and enacted by then or the legislature will need to pass a continuing resolution to fund state government until a budget agreement is finally reached.

Mixed Results on Zoning Mandates

A pair of bills opposed by NHMA that erode local control are going to committees of conference.

- [HB 685](#), mandating manufactured housing by right in residentially zoned areas.
- [HB 428](#), barring municipalities from enacting or enforcing any ordinances, regulations, or codes that deviate from the state building code, except as specifically permitted.

No amount of last-minute workshopping in a committee of conference is going to fix these bills. If you have a senator or representatives on these committees, **ask them to let these bills die this year** and tell the sponsors to come back next year with new legislation that balances the interests of all stakeholders and preserves local control.

The House voted Thursday to **non-concur** on [HB 342](#), exempting property owners from lot size, lot coverage, and density requirements if a majority of lots within a 1,000-foot radius don't meet the current zoning requirements.

However, the House or Senate also concurred on six zoning mandates opposed by NHMA:

- [SB 188](#), allows property owners or developers to use licensed, insured private providers for building code plan reviews and inspections related to the state building code and any local technical amendments, excluding fire prevention and fire safety codes, and creates deadlines for municipal actions. The House version gives municipalities the ability to approve private providers and makes other positive changes recommended by stakeholders.

- [SB 282](#), requires municipalities to allow residential buildings with four or fewer floors to have only one stairway, provided that the building is equipped with a compliant sprinkler system and meets specific fire code requirements.
- [SB 283](#), mandates that municipalities exclude below-grade areas, which include basements and sublevels, from the calculation of floor-area-ratios for new construction projects.
- * [SB 284](#), reduces the number of residential parking spaces a municipality can require per residential housing unit from 1.5 to one.
- [HB 296](#), relative to issuing building permits along private roads. NHMA does not object to Section 1 but does object to Section 2, which was added by amendment and sets the deadline for local appeals to the ZBA at 30 days, rather than allowing appeals to occur within a “reasonable period of time.” Property owners will likely suffer the consequences of this change, as municipalities will no longer be able to extend the time periods to accommodate them.
- [HB 457](#), mandates group or congregate living in every zoning district that allows residential housing.

All of these bills will be going to the governor, and it’s not too early to start [contacting the governor’s office](#) to request she veto the priority bills and any others that have adverse impacts on your municipality. Let her know that these bills go too far and rather than enact bad policy now, ask her to tell the legislature to go back to the drawing board and pass legislation next year that respects local control and is right for New Hampshire.

And while we’re on the subject of zoning mandates, also ask her to veto two more bills already on the way to her desk: [HB 577](#), which requires municipalities to allow either one detached or attached accessory dwelling unit (ADU) by right on single-family lots, and to veto [HB 631](#), which allows residential building in commercial zones, mandating mixed-use development in nearly every zoning district in New Hampshire. NHMA has already sent a [letter to the governor’s office](#) requesting these vetoes. In addition, [SB 281](#), prohibiting municipalities from denying building or occupancy permits for property adjacent to class VI roads under certain circumstances, was adopted in May and is also heading to the governor’s desk.

Status Quo on Risk Pools

The Senate chose to **non-concur** on [SB 297](#), relative to the operations and oversight of pooled risk management programs that are created by cities, towns, counties, and school districts, to reduce risks and associated insurance costs.

NHMA opposed the original Senate bill because of the effect it would have on the operations of insurance risk pools and, resultingly, the effect it would have on

municipalities that choose to participate in one or more pools, particularly by mandating that all pools operate under an “assessable” model that subjects members to potential mid-year assessments. The House amendment was a good compromise that addressed those concerns but was so different from the Senate position that a committee of conference would be unlikely to find common ground.

The failure of the bill means there will be no statutory changes regarding risk pools until next year, when this issue is sure to be back.

House, Senate Agree on Ambulance Billing

The Senate concurred with the House version of [SB 245](#), an NHMA priority bill relative to ground ambulance reimbursements. Stabilizing local and private ambulance costs, particularly in rural areas, has been the subject of multiple bills filed this year.

SB 245 requires insurers to reimburse providers at 325% of Medicare rates for two years on the condition that the ambulance service begins the process of becoming an in-network provider. During that period, a newly formed commission will conduct an in-depth study to determine fair, long-term reimbursement rates. The bill also eliminates balance billing—*i.e.* billing a patient for the difference between the full cost of the service and the amount their insurance plan pays, which was supported by all stakeholders. The bill now heads to the governor’s office.

What Else Happened at the Legislature?

Here is a status update on other important bills NHMA is following. Priority bills are denoted with an asterisk (*).

COMMITTEES OF CONFERENCE

* [HB 67](#), relative to agreements with the secretary of state for the use of accessible voting systems. NHMA supports both versions of the bill.

[HB 71](#), as amended by the Senate, this bill contains several unrelated provisions, including costly and unnecessary public notice requirements opposed by NHMA that municipalities with a population of 10,000 or more must follow before a re-assessment of property values. The House already killed **SB 225**, which contained this language. **Please contact the House members of this committee and ask them to pull this section.**

[HB 132](#), eliminating the requirement that certain relatives, including parents, spouses, and children, must provide support to indigent family members in need of public assistance. NHMA supports the House version of this bill.

HB 143, this is another grab bag of unrelated legislation. **Ask House members of this committee to take out the section regarding no trespass orders (NTOs), which requires a unanimous vote of a governing body at a public meeting to issue an NTO.**

HB 154, enabling voters to request to have their ballots hand-counted. NHMA opposes all versions of this bill.

HB 250, enabling local governing bodies to regulate the muzzling of dogs and increasing the fee to license certain dogs. NHMA supports both versions of this bill.

HB 421, introduces a new requirement for municipalities to annually mail tax exemption forms to property owners whose real estate was exempt in the previous tax year. NHMA opposes all versions of this bill.

HB 464, prohibiting certain candidates for political office from participating in counting ballots, enabling the use of certain personal information for determining voter eligibility, and relative to the reporting of low value campaign donations.

HB 737, as amended by the Senate, this bill changes the local option for Keno to an opt-out, rather than the current opt-in that has existed since 2017. This Keno-by-default language would override previous votes in municipalities to not allow this lottery game, as well as communities where the governing and legislative bodies never wanted to take up the question on their warrant. An attempt to add Keno by default in the House budget was already defeated, so contact members of this committee and ask them to **oppose the Senate version of the bill.**

SB 213, as amended, banning and creating a misdemeanor-level offense for public employees who, in the performance of their official duties, act in “any way designed to influence the vote of a voter on any question or office.” NHMA opposes this language, originally in **HB 340**, which was rereferred in the Senate.

SB 221, as amended by the House, mandates annual verification of the voter checklist. The Senate version mandates the verification every occur every four years in the year following the Presidential election, which is much more workable for cities and towns.

SB 291, relative to the religious use of land property tax exemption. NHMA opposes this bill, but the House version is far less concerning.

SB 302, as amended by the House, this bill—which deals with the landfill siting provisions also included in the state budget—contains unrelated sections about animal confiscation and veterinary assistants from other House bills that did not make it out of the Senate. NHMA opposes the House version.

CONCURRED BILLS

SB 43 (opposed original bill; support amended version) relative to removing articles of clothing from the definition of electioneering and authorizing cities, towns, and school districts to use electronic poll books at “town business and deliberative sessions and special meetings, and school district business and deliberative sessions and special meetings.”

* **HB 123** (support), defining pre-sequestration timber tax revenue, establishing a moratorium on carbon sequestration and establishing a commission to study the effects of carbon sequestration in New Hampshire forests upon state and local tax revenue, effective forest management, and the health of New Hampshire’s logging industry.

HB 124 (support), enabling a municipal forest committee or conservation commission to offer surplus money to the municipality for deposit in the municipal unreserved fund balance.

HB 151, allows municipalities to adopt a three-year term for supervisors of the checklist, electing one each year over a three-year cycle.

* **HB 200** (oppose), relative to the procedure for overriding a local tax cap.

HB 228 (oppose), relative to petitioned articles at annual or special town meetings.

HB 218, relative to providing victims of crime with a free police report of the investigation.

HB 270, requiring the preservation of electronic ballot counting device external storage devices.

HB 374, relative to local tax cap and budget laws.

Note: NHMA will send out a separate alert next week asking members to reach out to the governor’s office on specific priority bills heading to her desk.

NON-CONCURRED BILLS

* **HB 316**, relative to ground ambulance billing, was rendered unnecessary by the Senate concurrence on **SB 245** (see above), which had nearly the same language.

HB 554, clarifying the placement of advertising signs on state-owned property.

New Laws Impacting Municipalities

The governor signed ten bills of municipal interest into law since last week’s Bulletin went out. NHMA’s position on the bill, if any, is indicated:

- [**HB 168**](#) (support), relative to including municipal public works facilities as eligible capital facilities for the assessment of impact fees. *(effective 8/1/25)*
- [**HB 230**](#) (oppose), relative to the adoption of public health ordinances by municipalities. *(effective 8/1/25)*
- [**HB 272**](#) (oppose), exempting certain agricultural practices from municipal noise regulation. *(effective 8/1/25)*
- [**HB 288**](#), limiting how far in advance of an election an absentee ballot may be requested. *(effective 8/1/25)*
- [**HB 474**](#) (oppose), requiring a second witness at the counting of write-in votes. *(effective 8/1/25)*
- [**HB 569**](#) (support), relative to the establishment of county-wide communication districts as a local option. *(effective 8/1/25)*
- [**SB 16**](#), requiring municipalities to post a copy of election return forms on their websites and in public locations. *(effective 8/9/25)*
- [**SB 51**](#), relative to decal fees and the statewide public boat access program. *(effective 8/9/25)*
- [**SB 91**](#) (oppose), allowing one-time special appraisals of residences located in commercial zones. *(effective 4/1/26)*
- [**SB 133**](#), relative to the designation of emergency medical services performed by ambulance service providers as essential services. *(effective 8/9/25)*
- [**SB 229**](#), relative to the sale of uninspected bison, red deer, and elk meat. *(effective 6/30/25)*

How to Make your Voice Heard

At this stage of the session, there are no more public meetings at which to testify, so the most impactful way to make your voice heard on bills in a committee or conference is to [contact members of a committee](#) and/or your local legislators; there are [Contact a Senator](#) and [Contact a Representative](#) links on the [General Court](#) website.

Reminder: Sharing is Caring ... About Good Public Policy!

If you know of anyone who may benefit from the NHMA *Legislative Bulletin*, feel free to pass this email along and encourage them to sign up!

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 can sign up for the *Legislative Bulletin*, *Newslink*, and *Town & City* magazine in one place! (If you are having trouble logging into your account, [follow these steps.](#))

NHMA Events Calendar
2024 Final Legislative Bulletin

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