

New Hampshire Municipal Association

THE SERVICE AND ACTION ARM OF NEW HAMPSHIRE MUNICIPALITIES

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

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Editor's note: This is the last weekly Legislative Bulletin this spring. NHMA's final 2026 Legislative Bulletin will be issued in late summer and will include information on all bills with municipal impacts that were enacted this year, along with links to any updated legal guidance on specific changes. Thanks to everyone who helped stand up for local government this year by testifying or signing in at public hearings, reaching out to your local legislators on specific bills, sending letters or adopting resolutions, or providing context and background to support NHMA's advocacy. Your combined efforts truly made a difference on multiple occasions.

Legislature Acts on Final Bills

The House and Senate met Thursday to act on committee of conference reports on the remaining bills of the 2026 session, including problematic land use bills and other measures impacting municipalities. The bills adopted by both chambers—and others

adopted over the past several weeks—are heading to the governor, who can sign a bill, veto it, or let it pass without signing it.

Adopted by House and Senate

HB 244, updating and recodifying the municipal enforcement of the building and fire code. NHMA **supports**.

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. The expanded definition of “public employee” may deter municipal staff and public safety leaders from even answering questions about a proposal or using surveys to seek input on issues that could eventually appear on the ballot. NHMA **opposes**.

HB 1010 makes reasonable updates to the universal mixed-use zoning mandate allowing residential development in commercial zones. NHMA **supports**.

HB 1184, relative to the issuance of no trespass orders (NTOs) on municipal or school district property, allows 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 be reissued or rescinded. NHMA **neutral**.

HB 1300 mandates a local school tax cap question and related limitations on central office administrative expenses in school districts. The question will be on the November 2026 and 2028 state election ballots. Although the bill no longer requires municipalities to pay to print a separate ballot for this question, NHMA **opposes** the bill because of technical issues raised by the Department of Revenue Administration and local assessors, which could lead to increased municipal administrative and legal costs.

HB 1306, relative to the counting of absentee ballots. The conferees agreed to the Senate version of the bill with no changes. NHMA **opposes**.

HB 1469 creates licenses for massage establishments. Currently, only individual massage therapists must be licensed. The bill also provides municipalities and law enforcement with additional tools to address unlawful massage businesses. NHMA **supports**.

HB 1588 allows multi-family dwelling units on land zoned to permit commercial uses by right and prohibits municipalities from adding additional requirements unless expressly authorized in the statute. The bill exempts proposed residential development in commercial zones from all zoning ordinances except those ordinances regulating frontage, setbacks, and height and prohibits municipalities from adopting zoning ordinances for residential development in commercial zones that differ from those for commercial development. NHMA **opposes**.

SB 538 includes language extending net metering eligibility terms for municipal energy projects. NHMA **supports**.

SB 564 prohibits municipal limits on dead-end road length if the road is compliant with the state fire code or national standards and requires municipalities to allow developers to treat perimeter buffers as developable land. The bill also prohibits municipalities from adopting “additional restrictions or requirements regarding building or lot size for affected properties” before the April 1, 2027, effective date of the bill. NHMA **opposes**.

Note: The House voted to table **HB 609**, a bill **opposed** by NHMA relative to the General Court’s authority over municipal or agency rules and regulations regarding the sale, purchase, ownership, use, possession, transportation, licensing, permitting, taxation, and other matters pertaining to firearms, stun guns, Tasers, pepper spray devices, knives, and “other self-defense tools.” The bill is dead.

Governor Signs Five Municipal Bills

The governor recently signed five bills NHMA is following into law:

- **HB 1059** (Chapter 88), eliminating the prospective repeal of the regulation of number plate scanning devices. Effective May 28, 2026.
- **HB 1309** (Chapter 92), requiring the intent and effect of each warrant article to be stated clearly and without commentary or ambiguity. Effective July 27, 2026.
- **HB 1325** (Chapter 93), enabling supervisors of the checklist to correct the checklist on any day of the week. Effective May 28, 2026.
- **HB 1494** (Chapter 96), increasing the maximum amount of the optional veterans’ tax credit, optional combat service tax credit, and optional surviving spouse tax credit. Effective April 1, 2027.
- **SB 549** (Chapter 106), requiring certain syringe service program entities to provide options for disposal of used syringes and needles and creating reporting requirements for such entities. Effective August 26, 2026.

Legislative Policy Process Update

NHMA's biennial Legislative Policy Process wrapped up its first phase in May, setting the stage for member municipalities to shape advocacy priorities for the 2027-2028 legislative sessions. The process, which is driven by municipal input and collaboration, will culminate in September with the Legislative Policy Conference, scheduled for **Friday, September 11**, at NHMA's offices in Concord. At this in-person meeting, each member municipality may send a voting delegate, and each municipality—regardless of population—receives one vote on all policy matters.

At the conference, delegates will vote on the proposed 2027-28 Legislative Policies and Principles, developed through a structured, member-driven system that ensures representation from communities of all sizes and regions. More than 40 local officials, representing communities in all 10 New Hampshire counties, took part in this year's policy committee process at a series of meetings in April and May. The conference also provides an opportunity for municipalities to introduce additional ideas through the "floor proposal" process.

Once adopted, these policies become the foundation for NHMA's advocacy work during the legislative biennium, guiding staff in representing municipal interests before the state legislature and state agencies, ensuring that local perspectives remain central to policymaking discussions.

More details on the conference and the floor proposal process will be coming later this month, along with a link to the proposed policies and principles approved by the policy committees.

Thanks For Reading!

Although the *Legislative Bulletin* is taking a break as the session ends, the Advocacy Team will be busy over the coming months working on our Final 2026 *Legislative Bulletin*, talking with stakeholder groups, taking part in NHMA's biennial legislative policy process, monitoring study committees and commissions, working with legislators on potential bills for next session, and planning NHMA's member-driven legislative initiatives for next year. As we move into the fall, we will begin contacting legislators (once we know who they are, or at least who they are likely to be) to discuss legislation for 2027 and ascertain state budget priorities and what they may mean for municipal aid. After the elections, we shift into high gear, preparing for the unique excitement of another legislative session!

While we won't be sending out as many emails as we do in the first half of the year (although expect *a few* more), the Advocacy Team is here for our members year-round,

and we'd love to know what you are thinking—or hearing—about legislation. Feel free to drop us a line at: advocacy@nhmunicipal.org

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NHMA Events Calendar **2025 Final Legislative Bulletin**

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