

New Hampshire Municipal Association

THE SERVICE AND ACTION ARM OF NEW HAMPSHIRE MUNICIPALITIES

LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

Legislative Bulletin 9

2026 Session

February 27, 2026



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Action on Anti-NHMA Bills

A House committee voted Wednesday to recommend [HB 1359](#) and [HB 1360](#)—a pair of bills taking **aim at NHMA’s ability to advocate and at member municipalities’ ability to govern the organization**—as **inexpedient to legislate** on identical 9-1 votes.

But don't pop the champagne yet. Despite the overwhelming vote, both bills will be on a future (TBD) House regular calendar, meaning **they will be voted on separately, and floor amendments could be introduced.** In fact, a committee member referenced a potential amendment to **HB 1360** at Wednesday's executive session.

This is why **we need everyone who cares about local government having a collective voice at the State House to reach out to their [local House members](#)** to impress upon them the value NHMA provides and to **ask them to support the ITL motion and oppose any last-minute amendments or moves to table either bill.** Tell your local House members—who are probably already sick and tired of voting on yet another anti-NHMA bill—that these bills need to die, plain and simple.

For more on **HB 1359** and **HB 1360**, see the [January 23 Bulletin](#).

House and Senate in Session Next Week

Senate

The House and Senate will each meet on **Thursday, March 5**. Here are some bills NHMA is watching:

[SB 441](#), on the consent 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 a forthcoming amendment to [HB 348](#) that includes more comprehensive language on this issue.

[SB 527](#), on the regular calendar as OTP-A, would allow written notices from state agencies to municipalities to be sent via electronic mail unless the town or city clerk notifies the state agency that it objects to emailed written notices. Each state agency using email for written notices must maintain an up-to-date list of email addresses for each town or city clerk and a list of those towns or cities that object to emailed notices. NHMA **supports** a floor amendment to this bill that makes minor clarifications.

House

[HB 1134](#), on the regular calendar as OTP-A, is a technically flawed bill that mandates appropriations for warrant articles shall accumulate in the order in which articles are approved at an annual meeting or in the order in which articles appear on an official ballot for purposes of determining when a warrant article will trigger an override vote of a local tax or budget cap. NHMA **opposes**. Contact your [local House members](#) and **ask them to oppose this bill.**

Committee to Act on Manufactured Mandate

On **Tuesday, March 3, beginning at 10:00 a.m. in Government Place (GP) Room 231**, the [House Housing Committee](#) has executive sessions on more than two-dozen bills, including [HB 1357](#), which would allow manufactured housing in all residential zones. NHMA **opposes** this bill and **encourages members to [contact the committee](#)** before the executive session to share their opposition to this one-size-fits-all mandate.

Members can also **contact the committee and ask them** to back a pair of bills **supported** by NHMA dealing with accessory dwelling units (ADUs): [HB 1540](#), which establishes uniform requirements for ADUs and provides municipalities with authority and guidance for zoning, permitting, and environmental protections, and [HB 1026](#), which gives municipalities the option to prohibit accessory dwelling units associated with manufactured housing.

Hearings on Grab Bag of Municipal Bills

On **Tuesday, March 3, beginning at 9:15 a.m. in State House (SH) Room 122-123**, the [Senate Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee](#) is holding public hearings on a quartet of bills already passed by the House:

- [HB 164](#) (9:15 a.m.), which authorizes the state archives to create and maintain a website for the retention and public access of local electronic records and specifies that electronic municipal records may be stored on the website. NHMA **supports**.
- [HB 348](#) (9:30 a.m.), which outlines optional criteria municipalities may use to determine residency of individuals seeking general welfare assistance and 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 **supports**.
- [HB 244](#) (9:45 a.m.), which recodifies and makes technical updates to the state building and fire codes. NHMA **supports**.
- [HB 173](#) (10:00 a.m.), which prevents amendments to a petitioned warrant article that eliminate its subject matter or change the purpose of the article. NHMA **opposes**.

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

Whither Perpetual Tax Cap Referendum?

Still no action this week (and nothing currently scheduled next week) on the non-germane amendment to [HB 1300](#), a proposal **opposed** by NHMA that would create biennial local tax cap referendums for every city, town, county, and school district in New Hampshire. The original draft amendment, deemed a “work in progress,” mandates a biennial local property tax limitation ballot question for each state general election held in November of even-numbered years. The question would read: “For the next 2 fiscal years, shall the total property taxes levied by this [town/city/school district/county] be limited so they may not increase faster than inflation plus new taxable property growth?”

For the cap to take effect, it must be approved by a 3/5 majority in an individual jurisdiction. The votes will be counted separately for towns and cities, counties, and school districts. The bill does not impact the statewide education property tax. The same question will appear every other year in perpetuity, beginning this November, based on the effective date of the proposed amendment. Divorcing this ballot question from local elections and town meetings makes it easier to confuse voters as to what they are actually voting for. It also hamstring municipalities from authorizing long-term capital projects or labor agreements due to the threat of a future cap.

It has been more than five weeks since this amendment was unveiled, generating significant print, TV and radio coverage, and it’s unlikely that it will just fade away—although we can hope.

Update on Retirement System Bills

It has been one of the lightest years for bills dealing with the New Hampshire Retirement System—only seven—in at least a decade.

Two of three bills dealing with NHRS retirees working for participating employers remain with the [House Executive Departments and Administration \(ED&A\) Committee](#): [HB 1014](#), which exempts certain retirees from the 28-day waiting period for part-time employment, and [HB 1439](#), which modifies the application of penalties in cases in which a retiree exceeds the annual limit on hours worked; the third bill on this topic, [HB 1459](#), was killed earlier this month.

The House also killed [HB 1170](#), a state-funded cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for Group II (Police and Fire) retirees only, and [HB 1585](#), banning environmental, social, and governance-related investment strategies.

[HB 1471](#), described as a cost-neutral “cleanup bill” to address some ambiguous language included in the major pension changes enacted last year, remains with ED&A.

The Senate this month killed [SB 601](#), an NHMA-supported bill that would have established a state contribution of 7.5% of local employer retirement contributions for teachers, police officers and firefighters.

Quick Hits

Updates on other important bills we are following:

Sludge application moratorium: The [House Environment and Agriculture Committee](#) had a work session this week on [HB 1275](#), which creates a fund for farmers who have experienced losses or incurred costs due to the presence of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in soil, water, or agricultural products. A draft amendment was discussed that would eliminate a five-year moratorium on the land application of sludge and biosolids for agricultural use contained in the original bill. NHMA currently **opposes** the bill because of the moratorium, which would deprive municipal wastewater utilities of a major pathway of biosolid management and lead to higher costs and operational challenges. The committee is expected to take final action on the bill next week.

Battery Stewardship: [House Finance Division I](#) will hold a work session on [HB 1602](#) at **10:00 a.m. on Friday, March 13, in GP Room 230**. The bill, **supported** by NHMA and passed the House last week, would create a manufacturer-funded battery recycling program run through a third-party stewardship organization. The goal of the bill is to transfer the burden and costs associated with disposing batteries from municipalities, which are typically responsible for the waste stream, onto manufacturers. The concept is similar to the paint stewardship program created in [HB 451](#), which was approved by the House and Senate and will be sent to the Governor. [Contact members of Division I](#) in advance of the work session and **ask them to support HB 1602**.

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.

For the past several weeks we have been recruiting volunteers to serve on our three legislative policy committees—**and this is our last call**. These committees will review existing policies as well as legislative policy proposals submitted by local officials and make recommendations on those policies, which will go to the **NHMA Legislative Policy Conference in September**.

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 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](#).

If you are a municipal official in a city or town and are interested in **servicing on one of the policy committees**, please contact the advocacy staff at: governmentaffairs@nhmunicipal.org. For more information on what the committees are and how they work, see the [February 6 Bulletin](#).

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 **2024 Final Legislative Bulletin**

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