

## New Hampshire Municipal Association

THE SERVICE AND ACTION ARM OF NEW HAMPSHIRE MUNICIPALITIES

# LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN

Legislative Bulletin 02

2024 Session

January 11, 2024

### [Live Bill Tracker](#)

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## Road and Bridge Funding 3.0

On **Tuesday, January 16**, at **1:30 p.m.** in **State House Room 103**, the [Senate Finance Committee](#) will hold a hearing on [SB 398](#). This bill proposes to appropriate \$14 million for the repair and maintenance of municipally-owned bridges and \$26 million for municipal road repair and maintenance grants. As you may recall, SB 401 appropriated \$66 million in one-time road and bridge aid in 2022 and HB 2 appropriated \$20 million for the same purpose in 2023. With inflationary pressures, increased costs, and the highway block grant distribution remaining at near stagnant levels over the last decade, these additional one-time grant funds will continue to help cities and towns move their transportation infrastructure plans forward. ***We urge you to contact members of the [Senate Finance Committee](#) and your legislators to tell them how these dollars have helped and will continue to move projects forward at no additional cost to the property taxpayer.***

## Important RTK Bill to Be Heard Wednesday

As we mentioned in [Bulletin #1](#), on **Wednesday, January 17**, at **9:00 a.m.** in **LOB 206 - 208**, the **House Judiciary Committee** will hear testimony on [HB 1002](#), which seeks to strike a balance between large records requests that cost municipalities days of work and thousands of dollars and the importance of government transparency. **NHMA supports HB 1002.**

**We are hopeful local officials will be available to testify in support of HB 1002 on Wednesday. If, however, you are unavailable, we ask you to contact the members of the [House Judiciary Committee](#) and your own House members to explain the costs incurred when your municipality receives a large request.** Many of you have told us that, on the rare occasion that you have received such a request, your ability to provide other services for residents has suffered because of the need to comply; your legal budgets for the year have increased drastically; and it has been more difficult to respond to other individuals making routine records requests in a timely manner.

## Busy Wednesday for House Municipal & County Government

**Wednesday, January 17** will be a busy day for the **House Municipal & County Government Committee**. That committee will hear a number of important bills beginning at **10:00 a.m.** in **LOB 301 - 303**. The schedule is as follows:

10:00 AM	<a href="#">HB 1105</a>	relative to application of a local tax cap.
10:20 AM	<a href="#">HB 1461</a>	relative to live-streaming all properly noticed meetings and hearings of elected and appointed municipal bodies.

10:40 AM	<a href="#"><u>HB 1708</u></a>	relative to local records retention.
11:10 AM	<a href="#"><u>HB 1544</u></a>	relative to indemnification for municipalities adopting policies to address homelessness.
11:50 AM	<a href="#"><u>HB 1641</u></a>	relating to requiring large parking lots to have a solar power canopy.
1:30 PM	<a href="#"><u>HB 1124</u></a>	relative to limiting conflicts of interest and excessive concentration of power for municipal board and committee members.
2:15 PM	<a href="#"><u>HB 1223</u></a>	relative to governing body members of the budget committee.
2:45 PM	<a href="#"><u>HB 1478</u></a>	prohibiting a person from membership on the school board and select board concurrently.
3:15 PM	<a href="#"><u>HB 1396</u></a>	relative to prohibiting municipal inspections of owner-occupied units of multi-unit housing.

Some of these bills, such as **HB 1461** and **HB 1396**, would negatively impact some municipalities. With respect to **HB 1461**, there are five municipalities without websites, and numerous others that do not yet have broadband internet connections (we're still working with state partners on fixing that issue). And **HB 1396** would bar local enforcement of the state building code in some contexts for owner-occupied units in multi-unit residential structures of four units or less. Others, such as **HB 1708**, could assist municipalities; in this case, by providing a state portal for municipalities to upload municipal records.

Please consider joining us on Wednesday or contacting the [House Municipal & County Government Committee](#) about these bills, and check our [Bill Tracker](#) for NHMA's position on these bills and others.

## **First (of Two) Covered Bridge Bill Hearing on Friday**

On **Friday, January 19**, at **9:30 a.m.** in **LOB 202 - 204**, the **House Criminal Justice Committee** will hear testimony on [HB 1217](#), one of two bills seeking to address the problem of historic covered bridges being struck by unknown vehicles. (The other bill, [HB 1457](#), has not yet been scheduled for a hearing.) **NHMA supports HB 1217 (and HB 1457).**

We know that the towns of Campton, Cornish, Jackson, Lancaster, and Swanzey, among many others, own historic covered bridges which have been struck by motor vehicles and damaged in the past couple of years. When drivers cannot be identified and costs for that property damage cannot be recovered (in part) through their insurance, municipalities incur additional costs in repairing those bridges.

These bridges are a unique feature of colonial and post-colonial life in New Hampshire and heavily featured in the state's tourism and historic preservation efforts. Ensuring that the local officials who are charged with preserving these pieces of our history have the resources they need to repair them is critical to maintaining the rural charm of much of our state.

If your covered bridge has been damaged or you are concerned about future damage to your covered bridge, please contact the [House Criminal Justice Committee](#) and ask them to **support HB 1217.**

[Bill Hearings Schedule](#)  
[NHMA Events Calendar](#)  
[2023 Final Legislative Bulletin](#)  
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