

February 2, 2017

Legislature passes emergency bill to delay marijuana law

After initial reservation, Governor LePage signs bill

On Thursday, January 26, the day's legislative session turned out to be a much longer day than most lawmakers had expected. Despite the unanimous report from the Joint Standing Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs (VLA) on **LD 88, An Act To Delay the Implementation of Certain Portions of the Marijuana Legalization Act**, sponsored by Rep. Louie Luchini (D-Ellsworth), a last minute attempt to amend the bill to address the concerns of Governor Paul LePage resulted in a day-long debate that left the final outcome of the bill unresolved until the following afternoon.

After consultation with legislative leadership of both bodies on Friday, January 27, LD 88 was agreed to and submitted. The bill sought to address the more immediate flaws in the Marijuana Legalization Act (MLA), which was narrowly passed at the ballot box in November 2016. Supporters of the legalization of recreational marijuana in Maine drafted the bill and gathered the prerequisite number of signatures to put the referendum question to the voters. As a result, Maine joins just a handful of states that have legalized marijuana at the *state level*. The federal government still recognizes marijuana as an illegal Schedule 1 drug.

As noted earlier, LD 88 sought to begin the process of addressing significant drafting and policy questions brought about by the law's passage. Two of the most significant were ensuring that

minors were not granted access to legalized marijuana under the new law, and extending the timeframe contained in the MLA for full implementation of the retail sale of recreational marijuana. Under the proposed language in LD 88, that timeframe would be extended by three months, into February 2018. Individuals can possess and grow a limited amount of marijuana legally for their own use *in a non-public place*. Lastly, the amended form of LD 88 assigned the Maine Department of Agriculture as the primary state agency in charge of rulemaking impacting the MLA, but allows them to call upon the Commissioner of Administrative and Financial Services or the Commissioner of Public Safety for their expertise in the matter.

But a last-minute wrinkle almost derailed the emergency bill. Governor Paul LePage wanted to shift primary rule-making authority to the Maine Bureau of Alcoholic Beverages and Lottery Operations (BABLO) and have approximately \$1.6 million appropriated for the bureau to conduct their rulemaking work. An amendment was debated in the Maine House to proceed with the Governor's proposal, but it was ultimately rejected. The bill easily passed as an emergency bill in both legislative bodies. Governor LePage initially indicated he would not sign the bill in its current form, but reversed course on Friday, January 27,

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Appropriations committee to hold public hearings on Governor's budget

Beginning on Monday, February 6, the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations will hold public hearings all week on the tax provisions in the Governor's biennial budget for fiscal years 2018-2019.

- On **Monday, February 6, 2017**, the committee will hear testimony beginning at 10:00 a.m. on revenue sharing and property taxes. Included in this category are proposals on the disproportionate tax burden fund and municipal revenue sharing.
- On **Tuesday, February 7, 2017**, the committee will hear testimony beginning at 1:00 p.m. on the Business Equipment Tax Reimbursement (BETR) program and the Business Equipment Tax Exemption (BETE) program. (The Governor is proposing to convert property held under the BETR program to the BETE program and to eliminate retail from qualifying from BETR.)
- On **Thursday, February 9, 2017**, the committee will hear testimony beginning at 1:00 p.m. on the budget for the Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services, on tax expenditures, and on miscellaneous programs. Included on the list is the Bureau of Revenue Services Fund, elimination of the Board of Tax

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MAINE S T A T E CHAMBER *of* COMMERCE

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About the Maine State Chamber of Commerce: Since 1889, the Maine State Chamber has been fighting to lower your cost of doing business. Through our Grassroots Action Network and OneVoice program, we work with a network of approximately 5,000 companies statewide who see the value in such a service and provide the financial support that keeps our access, advocacy, and assistance efforts going strong. As Maine's Chamber, we make sure that the business environment of the state continues to thrive. The Maine State Chamber of Commerce advocates on behalf of their interests before the legislature and regulatory agencies and through conferences, seminars, and affiliated programs.

Joint Select Committee on Marijuana Legalization Implementation

- Sen. Roger Katz (R-Augusta), co-chair
- Sen. Kimberley Rosen (R-Bucksport)
- Sen. Joyce Maker (R-Calais)
- Sen. Mark Dion (D-Portland)
- Sen. Susan Deschambault (D-Biddeford)
- Rep. Teresa Pierce (D-Falmouth), co-chair
- Rep. Kimberly Monaghan (D-Cape Elizabeth)
- Rep. Scott Hamann (D-South Portland)
- Rep. Craig Hickman (D-Winthrop)
- Rep. Erik Jorgensen (D-Portland)
- Rep. Lydia Blume (D-York)
- Rep. Donald Marean (R-Hollis)
- Rep. Bruce Bickford (R-Auburn)
- Rep. Lance Harvell (R-Farmington)
- Rep. Patrick Corey (R-Windham)
- Rep. Michael Perkins (R-Oakland)
- Rep. Kent Ackley (I-Monmouth)

Marijuana Legalization... ***(Continued from Page 1...)***

and signed the bill into law as enacted.

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce testified before the VLA committee in support of LD 88. In particular, we supported the extension of the moratorium on the retail sale of marijuana. As the committee heard testimony on the bill, and in a subsequent work sessions, it became clear that the implications of the MLA on the state and in workplace – on employers and their relationships with employees – were far more complex than the drafters of the MLA had envisioned. While the MLA did give the legislature nine months to develop rules and any necessary statutory changes, the committee, and ultimately the entire legislature, was concerned this might not be enough time.

To that point, at least 50 bill titles have been proposed this session concerning Maine's legalization of recreational marijuana. The sheer volume of potential bills has resulted in an agreement among

legislative leadership to establish a special Joint Select Committee on Marijuana Legalization Implementation. The establishment of special select committees has happened before. Three years ago, a similar committee approach was adopted on the issue of workforce training and growth. Legislators were recently assigned to the committee (see sidebar), and it is expected that they will begin their work in the coming weeks.

The Maine business community has serious concerns with the implications this new law may have in the workplace. The Maine State Chamber will be following the work of the joint select committee carefully, and expects to testify on a number of the proposed marijuana bills, as well as participate in the rulemaking process. Maine State Chamber members can expect frequent updates on this important issue in the coming days and weeks. For questions or additional information, please contact Peter Gore, vice president of government relations, calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 107, or by emailing pgore@mainechamber.org. □

Help Maine K-12 students get a better education in science and engineering

EDITOR'S NOTE: Guest columns such as this one do not necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of our organization. They are the opinions of the guest author and are solely provided for your consideration.

Maine is poised to adopt a 21st century set of learning standards in science and engineering through **LD 49, *An Act To Improve Science And Engineering Education For Maine's Students***, which had a public hearing on Wednesday, January 25, before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs. Many Maine science educators, education organizations, businesses and business organizations testified in favor of adoption of the Next Generation Science Standards. To date, 55 statements have been provided to the committee (see http://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/display_ps.asp?LD=49&snum=128#).

These new standards are superior to the ones teachers are currently using, and in fact, most teachers and districts have already adopted them. This has led to a situation where the state test is based on an old set of standards to which most are not teaching.

The advantages of these new standards are many, including: Maine teachers helped to develop them; they incorporate engineering with science unlike our current standards that hardly mention engineering; they were developed from a framework written by the National

Academy of Sciences; and, they focus on scientific and engineering practices, disciplinary core ideas, and crosscutting concepts. They are not without controversy since some still deem the theory of evolution and human-induced climate change as unproven.

To date, some 50 major corporations have signed a letter of support—corporations such as IBM, Microsoft, DuPont, Eli Lilly, Intel, and 3M (see <http://www.nextgenscience.org/voices-of-support>). In Maine, businesses and business organizations on record that support LD 49 include Texas Instruments, Jackson Laboratory, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, and Educate Maine.

Having more businesses support this bill could help sway the legislative and executive branches to bring educational practice into alignment with policy and to provide Maine students with a 21st century science and engineering education. If your company is willing to add its name to the letter of support cited above, or if you have further questions, please contact Tom Keller, executive director of the Maine STEM Council, by calling (207) 626-3230, ext. 115, or by emailing tkeller@mmsa.org. □

Employers looking to hire should attend upcoming career fairs

The Husson University's Business and General Career Fair is scheduled for **Wednesday, February 22, 2017**, from **10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** in the **Richard Dyke Center for Family Business** on the university's Bangor campus. All students from Husson's Business programs (Accounting, Marketing, Health Care Administration, Finance, IT), Science and Humanities (Psychology, Sciences, Health Care Studies, Liberal Arts) and the New England School of Communications (Video, Audio, Web, Marketing) will be encouraged to attend this career fair.

Employers are encouraged to promote full-time, internship, and part-time openings to our students. There is registration fee of \$100.00 for profit organizations and \$50.00 for non-profit organizations. **Please save the date or register by visiting** <http://bit.ly/2eX82XE>. If you cannot attend the fair and want to post jobs or internships with us you can do so at: www.collegecentral.com/husson. □

Fact Sheet on the Next Generation Science Standards

Quick primer on educational terms...

- 1 “Standards” and “performance expectations” define what students should know and be able to as a result of instruction. They do not mandate how or using what materials or contexts or when these should be taught.
- 2 “Curriculum” is the plan a teacher, school or district develops from standards to ensure that students are getting opportunity to learn the subject.
- 3 “Instruction” is what happens in the classroom and is completely under local control by the classroom teacher.
- 4 “Assessment” is what a teacher, district and state uses to monitor progress in student learning.

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Biennial Budget...

(Continued from Page 1...)

Appeals, Unorganized Territory Tax, County tax Reimbursement, etc.

- On **Friday, February 10, 2017**, the committee will hear testimony beginning at 10:00 a.m. on the income, estate and sales tax proposals in the budget.

For more information, please contact Linda Caprara, senior government relations specialist (taxation) and director of grassroots advocacy, by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 106, or by emailing lcaprara@mainechamber.org. □

Science Standards... (Continued from Page 3...)

- 5 “Proficiency” means that students have to demonstrate learning as opposed to “credit” that is based on factors such as achievement, effort, compliance, and time.

Where did the Next Generation Science Standards come from?

- 1 They are not ‘Common Core’ and were developed in a completely different way. They are a set of standards developed and used by a number of states. The current science MLRs were based on the National Standards Education Standards (1996) that are now outdated.
- 2 They are based on a report from the National Academy of Sciences, a private, nonprofit, nongovernmental organization of the country’s leading researchers.
- 3 Of the 18 members of the National Academy of Sciences committee that

wrote the foundational report (*A Framework for K-12 Science Education*), 2 were Nobel Laureates, 9 were members of the National Academy of Sciences or National Academy of Engineering, and 9 were educators, cognitive/learning scientists, or policymakers.

- 4 This National Academy of Sciences *Framework for K-12 Science Education* was used by a team of 26 lead state partners to develop the NGSS. Each lead state formed review teams drawing from higher education, the business community, researchers and especially from all grade bands of teachers within their respective states.
- 5 Maine was an active member from Day One in development of the NGSS as a lead state partner and had the third highest teacher involvement, per capita, in the development of the science standards.

What do the NGSS promote that is different than past standards?

- 1 The NGSS are built around 3 ‘dimensions’ – science and engineering practices (such as asking questions and defining solutions), core disciplinary ideas (such as life and physical science) and crosscutting concepts (such as systems and patterns).
- 2 The NGSS call for teachers to develop instruction to incorporate these 3 dimensions in lessons and units. The NGSS offer clear endpoints for grade levels K-5 and model pathways for middle and high school. The NGSS do NOT prescribe HOW to teach units that will reach the standards.
- 3 Engineering plays a much larger role than ever before.
- 4 Students are critical consumers of information and more actively engaged in the learning process. They design more, read more, write more, critique more, investigate more, analyze more.

Why are these better for Maine?

- 1 Maine’s current standards separate content from process, and only content is assessed on state measures.
- 2 Most districts in Maine have already adopted them. The Maine Science

Teachers Association has recently gathered data on this.

- 3 It is good policy to have mandated state testing assess what is being taught.
- 4 Standards will have a positive impact on the development of STEM teachers by inspiring more graduates to pursue a teaching career.

What are the implications of adopting the NGSS?

- 1 Since so many districts have already adopted them, state adoption will lead to more effective and efficient sharing of instructional resources and professional development. The Department will be able to lead teachers to an understanding of the shifts in science education and to an understanding that instruction should focus on all 3 dimensions and not on content alone.
- 2 Maine teachers will be able to use resources developed by 18 other states plus the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity that have already adopted the NGSS to help them develop lessons.
- 3 The Maine Educational Assessment will be aligned to the standards that are being taught resulting in more useful data for educators.
- 4 Maine students will be better equipped to enter the career market of the 21st century due to an emphasis on problem solving, critical thinking, and argumentation based on evidence.

What are the economic implications for adopting NGSS?

- 1 Job projections for STEM occupations are strong for the next decade and it is critical that Maine develops a strong talent pipeline to fill those jobs.
- 2 80% of new jobs created over the next decade will require STEM skills.
- 3 In Maine, in STEM occupations, about 22% of openings will be due to growth; in non-STEM occupations, just 9% of openings will be due to growth.
- 4 Employees in STEM occupations earn 84% more per hour than workers in non-STEM occupations.
- 5 Jobs in STEM occupations are expected to increase by about 5,400 by 2024 while jobs in non-STEM occupations is not expected to change much if any. □



Public Hearings

Public hearings are open to everyone. This public hearing schedule is subject to change. Questions may be directed to the Secretary of the Senate's Office at (207) 287-1540. For the most current schedule, please visit <http://legislature.maine.gov/llo/committee-membership/9089/> or contact the committee clerk.

Monday, February 6, 2017

Environment and Natural Resources 1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 216

LD 103, An Act To Prohibit the Use of Certain Disposable Food Service Containers (Sponsor: Rep. Zeigler of Montville)

Monday, February 13, 2017

Environment and Natural Resources 10:00 a.m.; Cross Building, Room 216

LD 182, An Act To Protect Firefighters by Establishing a Prohibition on the Sale and Distribution of New Upholstered Furniture Containing Certain Flame-retardant Chemicals (Sponsor: Rep. Kumiega of Deer Isle)

Veterans and Legal Affairs 10:00 a.m.; State House, Room 437

LD 31, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Require That Signatures on a Direct Initiative of Legislation Come from Each Congressional District (Sponsor: Espling of New Gloucester)

LD 53, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Prohibit Payment Per Signature for Citizen Petition Drives (Sponsor: Rep. Guerin of Glenburn)

LD 212, RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine To Require That Signatures on a Direct Initiative of Legislation Come from Each State Senatorial District (Sponsor: Rep. Harvell of Farmington)

Tuesday, February 14, 2017

Health and Human Services 1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 209

LD 161, An Act To Remove the Treasurer of State from the Maine Vaccine Board (Sponsor: Rep. Perry of Calais)

Wednesday, February 15, 2017

Taxation 1:00 p.m.; State House, Room 127

LD 72, An Act To Clarify the Tax Laws for Title to Real Estate by Releasing Inheritance Tax Liens (Sponsor: Rep. Pouliot of Augusta)

LD 77, An Act To Exempt from Maine Income Tax Income Earned by Members of the Armed Services While on Active Duty (Sponsor: Rep. Espling of New Gloucester)

LD 235, An Act To Repeal the Service Provider Tax (Sponsor: Sen. Brakey of Androscoggin)

Thursday, February 16, 2017

Insurance and Financial Services 1:00 p.m.; Cross Building, Room 220

LD 284, An Act Concerning Notification after a Security Breach (Sponsor: Rep. Stearns of Guilford) □

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Digest of New Legislation

Maine Chamber staff have studied each of these recently printed bills to assess potential impact on business trends. If you have concerns regarding any bill, please communicate those concerns to a member of our governmental services staff at (207) 623-4568.

ENVIRONMENTAL

LD 103, An Act To Prohibit the Use of Certain Disposable Food Service Containers. (Rep. Zeigler, D-Montville) *Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources.* Beginning January 1, 2018, this bill prohibits the sale or distribution, at retail or wholesale, in the State of disposable food service containers composed in whole or in part of polystyrene foam, as well as disposable food service containers that are not recyclable or compostable unless there is no recyclable or compostable product available at a comparable cost. This bill requires the Department of Environmental Protection to adopt rules to implement these statutory provisions.

LD 159, An Act To Prohibit the Mining of Massive Sulfide Ore Deposits on State Lands. (Rep. Duchesne, D-Hudson) *Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources.* This bill amends the laws regarding mining on state lands to prohibit the issuance of a mining lease that authorizes the mining of a massive sulfide ore deposit located on state lands. The bill defines a "massive sulfide ore deposit" as a metal sulfide ore deposit that, as determined by the Maine Geological Survey, contains in total 1,000,000 tons or more of metallic minerals.

LD 160, An Act To Prohibit the Mining of Massive Sulfide Ore Deposits under the Maine Metallic Mineral Mining Act. (Rep. Duchesne, D-Hudson) *Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources.* This bill amends the Maine Metallic Mineral Mining Act to prohibit the Department of Environmental Protection from approving an application for a mining permit if the applicant proposes to mine a metallic mineral ore deposit that contains a massive sulfide ore deposit. The bill defines a "massive sulfide ore deposit" as a metal sulfide ore deposit that, as determined by the Maine Geological Survey, contains in total 1,000,000 tons or more of metallic minerals.

LD 182, An Act To Protect Firefighters by Establishing a Prohibition on the Sale and Distribution of New Upholstered Furniture

Legislative Strictly Social

This Networking Reception
is brought to you by:

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Tuesday, March 7, 2017 ♦ 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.
The Senator Inn & Spa (Western Avenue, Augusta)

COMPLIMENTARY HORS D'OEUVRES & CASH BAR

The Maine State Chamber invites you to its **FREE Legislative Strictly Social** networking reception. Our annual Legislative Strictly Social is an ideal way for you, the Maine business leader, to interact with legislators, business associates, new and prospective Maine State Chamber members, and government representatives in a relaxed setting. **Registration information and directions are available from our homepage at www.mainechamber.org.**

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If you are interested in sponsoring this event, please contact Melody Rousseau for more information by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 102, or by emailing melodyr@mainechamber.org.

Containing Certain Flame-retardant Chemicals. (Rep. Kumiega, D-Deer Isle) *Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources.* This bill prohibits a person from selling or offering for sale or distributing for promotional purposes new upholstered furniture containing more than 0.1% of a flame-retardant chemical or containing more than 0.1% of a mixture that includes flame-retardant chemicals.

LD 253, An Act To Repeal the Maine Metallic Mineral Mining Act. (Rep.

Chapman, D-Brooksville) *Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources.* This bill is a concept draft pursuant to Joint Rule 208.

This bill proposes to repeal the Maine Metallic Mineral Mining Act, as contained in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 38, chapter 3, subchapter 1, article 9, which was enacted in 2012 under Public Law 2011, chapter 653. In addition to repealing the Maine Metallic Mineral Mining Act, this bill would repeal any other statutory provisions enacted as part

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New Legislation... **(Continued from Page 6...)**

of Public Law 2011, chapter 653 and would reenact any statutory provisions that were repealed under that same legislation. This bill would further direct the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Maine Land Use Planning Commission to engage in separate rule-making processes to remove any changes to their respective rules that were implemented in accordance with Public Law 2011, chapter 653.

LD 254, An Act To Implement a Moratorium on Metallic Mineral Mining. Emergency (Rep. Chapman, D-Brooksville) *Joint Standing Committee on Natural Resources*. This bill implements a moratorium on metallic mineral mining in the State by prohibiting the Department of Environmental Protection from issuing a permit to mine under the Maine Metallic Mineral Mining Act.

HEALTH CARE

LD 386, An Act To Establish Universal Health Care for Maine. (Sen. Gratwick, D-Penobscot) *Joint Standing Committee on* . A concept draft, this bill proposes to establish a single-payor, universal health care system in the State. Portions of the system will be based on the single-payor system in place in Vermont and the single-payor proposals submitted previously in Maine and Colorado. The single-payor system proposed in this bill will also be responsive to any changes made on the federal level to the federal Affordable Care Act.

MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION

LD 387, An Act To Provide for Oversight of Maine's Recreational Marijuana Laws. (Sen. Gratwick, D-Penobscot) *Joint Standing Committee on Marijuana Legalization Implementation*. This bill directs the Statewide Coordinating Council for Public Health to serve in an advisory capacity on public health matters related to retail marijuana to the Commissioner of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry acting as chief administrative officer of the state licensing authority for the cultivation, manufacture, distribution, testing and sale of retail marijuana.

UTILITIES AND ENERGY

LD 131, An Act to Protect the Biomass Industry. (Sen. Saviello, R-Wilton) *Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy*.

This bill is a concept draft which proposes to amend the laws pertaining to biomass facilities in order to help the biomass industry succeed.

LD 140, An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Support Entrepreneurial Activity, Attract Business and Enhance Demographic In-migration by Investing in High-speed Broadband Infrastructure and To Amend the Law Governing the Municipal Gigabit Broadband Network Access Fund. (Rep. Higgins, R-Dover-Foxcroft) *Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy*. This bill authorizes a General Fund bond issue, in the amount of \$10,000,000, to be allocated to the Municipal Gigabit Broadband Network Access Fund and distributed by the ConnectME Authority in a series of grants, to expand high-speed broadband Internet infrastructure in unserved and underserved areas throughout the State of Maine.

LD 229, An Act To Prohibit an Electric Utility from Charging a Customer for Using an Electromechanical Meter. (Sen. Miramant, D-Knox) *Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy*. This bill prohibits a transmission and distribution utility from charging a customer a fee, monthly charge or higher rate for declining the installation of a wireless smart meter or for the removal of a wireless smart meter. A transmission and distribution utility cannot include cost associated with a customer's decision in choosing a smart meter in rates charged to that customer. An investor-owned transmission and distribution utility, with approval by the PUC, may decrease the number of times an electromechanical meter is read for a customer that declines the installation of a wireless smart meter but may not read the meter less than once every 12 months. The utility may establish a method to collect rates based on the average electricity consumption of the customer.

If a transmission and distribution utility prefers a more frequent electromechanical meter reading, the utility may establish a method for a customer to provide the utility with a more frequent electromechanical meter reading, as long as the method does not impose a cost on the customer. This bill requires the utility to establish a process by which the utility provides a refund to a customer if a billing based on average usage results in an overpayment by a customer and an appropriate rebilling of a customer if such a billing results in an underpayment by the customer.

LD 240, An Act To Increase Transparency in Maine's Electricity Market. (Sen. Hamper, R-Oxford) *Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy*. This bill prohibits a

competitive electricity provider from continuing generation service to a consumer for longer than 12 months without annual express consent from the consumer.

LD 255, An Act To Implement Electric Grid Reliability Recommendations. (Rep. Ralph Chapman, D-Brooksville) *Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy*. This bill is a concept draft. It proposes directing the PUC to pursue the 4 recommendations made by the Emprimus LLC of Minneapolis, MN in their report to the PUC filed January 6, 2015, Docket Number 2013-8 00145. The report was in reference to the effect of geomagnetic disturbances and electromagnetic pulses on the State's electric grid.

LD 256, An Act To Ensure Continued Availability of High-speed Broadband Internet at Maine's Schools and Libraries. (Rep. Grohman, D-Biddeford) *Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy*. This bill changes the limit on the amount collected on prepaid wireless telecommunications service from a percentage to a flat amount. This bill also requires the Public Utilities Commission to convene a stakeholder group to evaluate and provide recommendations regarding the method of collection of funds to support telecommunications access at libraries and public schools.

LD 257, An Act To Enable Municipalities Working with Utilities To Establish Microgrids. (Rep. Devin, D-Newcastle) *Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy*. This bill is a concept draft. It proposes to establish measures to allow municipalities, working cooperatively with electrical utilities, to create microgrids, which are electricity distribution systems consisting of distributed energy sources, including demand management, storage and generation and loads capable of operating in parallel with, or independently from, the main power grid.

LD 259, An Act To Limit Rates Charged by Competitive Electricity Providers. (Rep. Higgins, R-Dover-Foxcroft) *Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy*. This bill prohibits a competitive electricity provider from charging a residential consumer a rate for generation service that is higher than the rate charged for standard-offer service.

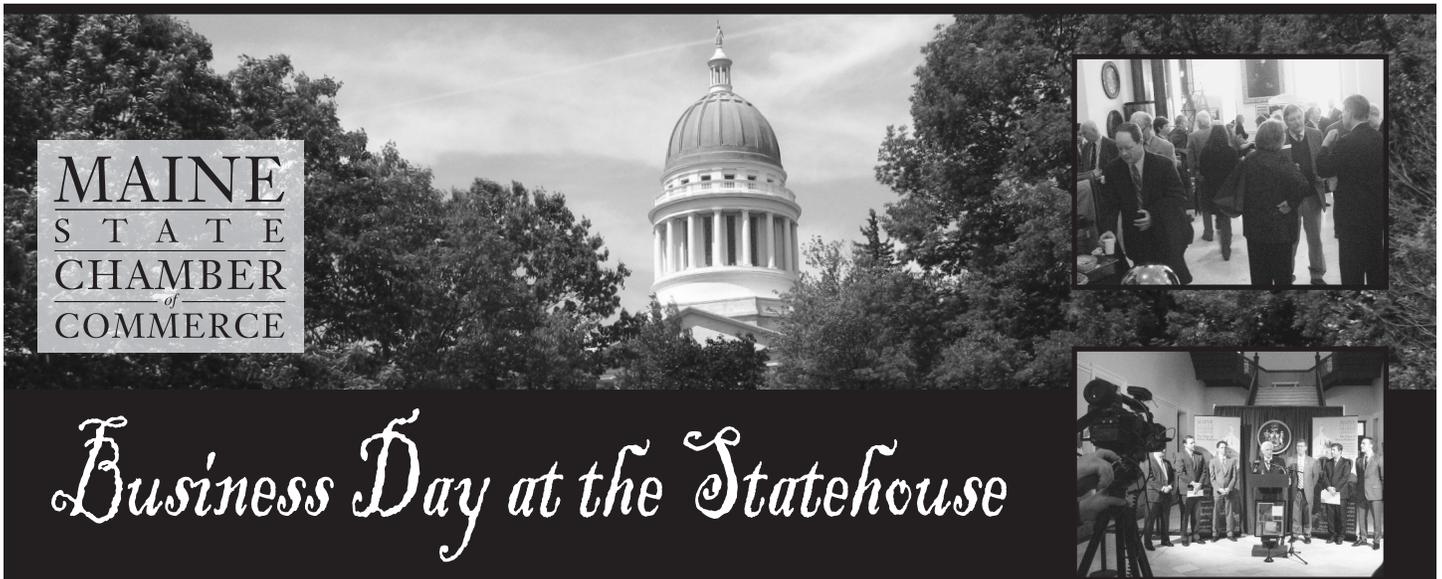
LD 344, An Act To Provide Opportunity for Energy Cost Reduction for Maine Businesses and Citizens. (Sen. Dion, D-Cumberland) *Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy*. This bill extends the expiration date for the execution of an energy cost reduction contract from December 31, 2018 to December 31, 2020. □

Periodicals

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Thursday, May 11 ♦ 8:00 a.m. to Noon ♦ Statehouse Hall of Flags

The Maine State Chamber is hosting its annual Business Day at the Statehouse on Thursday, May 17, 2017, from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in the Hall of Flags (Statehouse, Second Floor).

For more information or to RSVP, please contact Linda Caprara, senior government relations specialist / director of grassroots advocacy, by calling (207) 623-4568, ext. 106, or by emailing lcaprara@mainechamber.org. With your participation, the “Voice of Maine Business” will resonate throughout Augusta!

