

Public Affairs Update

END-OF-SESSION SUMMARY, PART 2

In the second part of our end-of-session summary, we are listing the results of transportation and tax bills. MTA was very successful in achieving the desired result with the transportation bills. In taxation, however, we have lodging tax increases hanging over us to be dealt with in the next session. We know we will have a lot of work to do kill these proposals and prevent Maine from having one of the highest state lodging tax rates in New England and the nation.



TRANSPORTATION

“Vacationland” To “Staycationland” - KILLED

[LD 120](#) (Rep. Ackley, C-Monmouth), would have changed the slogan on motor vehicle license plates from "Vacationland" to "Staycationland." The sponsor realized it was an unpopular idea and asked the committee members to kill it—which they did, unanimously.

Cruise Ship Ban - KILLED

[LD 331](#) (Rep. Hubbell, D-Bar Harbor), which would have prohibited ships over 200 feet from entering the waters around southern Mount Desert Island, was unanimously killed in committee. MTA testified in opposition to this bill as it was unconstitutional, unnecessary, and would have set a bad precedent.

Seasonal Gas Tax- KILLED

[LD 1157](#), the seasonal gas tax bill (Rep. McLean, D-Gorham), was unanimously killed in committee. MTA testified against this bill as it would have sent a bad message to our visitors, as well as increasing taxes on Maine citizens. The amount of money raised by the gas tax has almost no variance between summer and winter months so this wasn't a worthwhile idea.

Gas Tax Study - ENACTED

[LD 945](#) (Rep. Martin, R-Greene) establishes a study to find sustainable funding for Maine's infrastructure needs. Although a gas tax increase could result from this, taking more time to carefully consider what tax and fee increases may be necessary is the better way to go compared to a seasonal gas tax.

TAX

Local Option Sales Tax - KILLED

Three local option sales tax bills that would have affected all retail ([LD 65](#), Rep. Beebe-Center, D-Rockland; [LD 156](#), Sen. Miramant, D-Knox; and [LD 1110](#), Rep. Gramlich, D-Old Orchard Beach) were killed in the Taxation Committee.

Lodging Tax Increases – CARRIED OVER

The local option lodging tax increase, [LD 1254](#) (Rep. Sylvester, D-Portland), was not going to pass in the Senate so its supporters, in an effort to save it, moved to send the bill back to the Taxation Committee where it was approved to be carried over to the next session.