



Legislative Update: June 11, 2021

While the House and Senate are debating and voting on individual bills, with each proposal passing back and forth between the bodies several times to allow ample time for consideration and corrections, the Joint Standing Committee continues to work on LD 221, the Governor's biennial budget.

A quick look at the Legislative website shows the committee has hosted twenty two public hearings and held fifteen work sessions, as recently as yesterday, on this important legislation. As I write this late Friday morning, I am listening to the committee as they vote line by line whether to support each component of the budget, "moving forward" those items with unanimous consent while setting aside, for now, those where further discussion is needed. Senate Chair Cathy Breen mentioned likely work over the weekend.

In the eight years I served in the Maine House, I gained more and more appreciation and respect for the Representatives and Senators who chose to serve on this, the most intense, time-consuming, and impactful committee in the Legislature. I tip my hat to them today, for the hard work they have done with more ahead.

The House and Senate convened Monday through Thursday this week and will do so next week through Wednesday's Constitutional adjournment date. There is talk of a Special Session beyond that date in order to complete all the work ahead. The Statehouse IS OPEN to the public, with masks, or you can watch proceedings online using these links:

[Senate Chamber Video Livestream](#)

[House Chamber Video Livestream](#)

You can search [here](#) to watch recordings of prior public hearings and work sessions.

You can read GrowSmart Maine's testimony [here](#)

See the status of our key bills [here](#)

Public hearings this week

One more this week, as Appropriations and Financial Affairs considered [LD 1733](#), "An Act To Provide Allocations for the Distribution of State Fiscal Recovery Funds". [GrowSmart Maine's testimony](#) in strong support is one of 114 pieces of written testimony in support of this proposal.

Follow Up On Earlier Public Hearings: Further Committee Action:

[LD 1312](#) "An Act To Remove Barriers to Accessory Dwelling Units and Allow Accessory Dwelling Units where Single-family Houses Are Allowed" sponsored by Rep. Geiger. **Bill Summary: *This bill requires municipalities to allow one accessory dwelling unit on the same lot as a single-family dwelling unit and outlines certain limits to restrictions a municipality can place on tiny houses. It also addresses inspection requirements.*** In our testimony, we noted that accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are a valuable component of a community's effort to provide housing choices. ADUs offer a relatively straight forward, affordable option for accommodating housing needs that evolve from starter housing to aging-in place over a lifetime. We also highlighted one of our Community Guides, **[Accessory Apartments, An Affordable Housing Strategy](#)**, provides ADU guidance for municipalities and links to our **[ADU Ordinance Overview](#)**. provides valuable information on this topic.

THIS WEEK: While we supported the bill, we worked with Maine Municipal Association to offer an amendment for the committee's consideration. As discussed earlier, there was some confusion over this. As it stands now, MMA continues to work with committee members and it looks likely there will be a positive, unanimous outcome. I hope to provide the details next week.

In The Legislature

[LD 609](#), "Resolve, To Establish a Commission To Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Zoning and Land Use Restrictions" has been funded and achieved final enactment and will head to the Governor's desk for her signature.

[LD 1530](#) "An Act To Allow People To Live in Tiny Homes as a Primary or Accessory Dwelling" was Passed to be Engrossed in the House and will head to the Senate for further consideration and votes in both bodies for final enactment.

In its final form, It requires municipalities to permit tiny homes to be placed or erected on individual lots where single family dwellings are allowed or as an accessory structure, subject to all applicable land use requirements as single-family dwellings or as an accessory structure.

Partnerships: In addition to the Maine Alliance for Smart Growth, we are working with two other collaborative efforts this session: We have joined **Climate Maine** to review and prioritize legislative proposals that fall within our policy priorities to ensure our advocacy is effectively coordinated with others. In addition we continue to lead the policy work of the **[Maine Broadband Coalition](#)**, which will focus on several key funding and policy bills. Check out the **[Broadband Policy Page](#)** for testimony, value propositions for each committee, and recordings of the Broadband Caucus!