

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY



Maine Real Estate &
Development Association

Supporting Responsible Development

Legislative Update – Winter 2020

MEREDA Hosts Hall of Flags Day

On January 8, 2020, the Legislature convened its Second Regular Session of the 129th Legislature, and MEREDA hosted a Hall of Flags event to welcome legislators, celebrate the state's 200th birthday, and kick off MEREDA's 35th Anniversary as Maine's premiere commercial real estate and development association. The Hall of Flags is located on the second floor of the State House in Augusta. During the event, MEREDA members experienced the hustle of legislative activities and connecting with legislators from their home districts, as well as in leadership and on key committees. In addition to serving birthday cake to celebrate both Maine and MEREDA, the event showcased some of MEREDA's members and displays of past Notable Project winners.

Short Session, Big Issues

Pursuant to Maine law, Title 3, Section 2, the Second Regular Session of the Legislature shall adjourn no later than April 15, 2020. Despite the short session, legislators have their work cut out for them as they tackle over 400 carry-over bills in addition to over 150 newly-admitted bills submitted with approval by the Legislative Council in October and early December. Some of the big issues legislators are considering this session include: paid family leave; transportation funding; a supplemental budget; and a number of bond proposals (including bonds for affordable housing and historic preservation). As legislators work through these matters, we expect them to be eager to adjourn so that they can turn their attention to the upcoming 2020 election.

The MEREDA Public Policy Committee (PPC) will continue to meet bi-weekly throughout the session to monitor these matters and others.

Monitoring the Maine Climate Council

In the First Regular Session of the 129th Legislature, the state enacted a law to curb greenhouse gas emissions by 80% below 1990 levels by 2050, with interim reductions of 45% by 2030. These efforts are being led by the Maine Climate Council, a 39-member body working to update the state's Climate Action Plan and make recommendations for potential legislation to achieve the necessary reductions. The PPC is monitoring the work of the Climate Council, and specifically the Buildings, Infrastructure and Housing Working Group. That working group is tasked with making

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recommendations to curb greenhouse gas emissions from the building sector, and the PPC will be reviewing the working group recommendations that could impact responsible development in Maine.

Exploring an Extension of the Historic Tax Credit

The current sunset date for the Maine Historic Preservation Tax Credit (HTC) is December 31, 2023. MEREDA is working with a number of other stakeholders including CEI, Maine Preservation, GrowSmart Maine and Portland Landmarks to explore options for extending or eliminating the sunset date. The HTC has been an overwhelming success in preserving Maine's historic landmarks and promoting economic development. To ensure that current and upcoming historic rehabilitation projects will be able to take advantage of this important development tool, the stakeholder group is meeting with key legislators and leadership to explore legislation to extend or eliminate the sunset date during this current legislative session.

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