



MEREDA Advocacy Newsletter
1/24/22

Welcome to the 1st Edition of the MEREDA Advocacy Newsletter for 2022!

Welcome to our first edition of the MEREDA Advocacy Newsletter for 2022. This newsletter will be released on a bi-weekly basis during the Legislative Session. In this newsletter you may find, among other things:

- Updates on MEREDA's advocacy efforts before the 130th Legislature;
- Commentary on the current status of the legislature generally and where we see them focusing their activities in the coming days and weeks;
- Information about upcoming hearings and work sessions of particular interest to MEREDA;
- Calls to action for outreach to legislators, other allies to help promote or oppose legislation of importance to MEREDA;
- Information about key local activities including policy priorities from the Local Issues Committee; and
- Relevant additional information about bills in the MEREDA Legislative Database.

The Public Policy Committee works to advance a more fair, practical, and and predictable policy landscape for commercial real estate development in Maine. We hope this newsletter will provide some insight into how we do that work and what we hope to achieve in 2022. If you have any questions about the content of this newsletter, please feel free to reach out to our Public Policy Counsel, Elizabeth Frazier at efrazier@pierceatwood.com, or Shelly Clark at info@mereda.org.

Second Regular Session of the 130th Legislature Convenes, Commences Virtual Committee Work

The Second Regular Session of the 130th Legislature convened on January 5, 2022 in person at the State House in Augusta. Legislators were required to meet in person to formally convene legislative activities and are scheduled to return in person on January 25 to move some bills off the floor and to consider nominations and appointments to boards and commissions. In the meantime, legislative committees have been meeting virtually in the same manner as last year. This presents a challenge to legislators and advocates alike as everyone tries to have conversations about important policy discussions but those conversations are often patchwork



and always virtual - it's just not the same when you're trying to negotiate substantive matters or hold productive brainstorming sessions.

MEREDA Engages with Recommendations of Housing Commission, other Housing and Land Use Legislation

The number of bills up for consideration this session is a bit lower than usual, but there will be plenty of work for MEREDA. Some of the work we know will be coming includes:

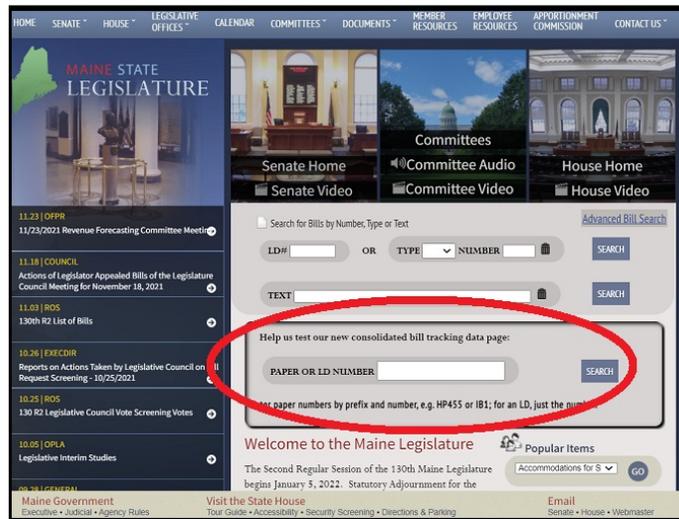
- Engaging with the recommendations of the Housing Commission that met and issued a final report in 2021. Information about the commission, including MEREDA's comments on the draft report and a copy of the final report, are available [here](#). The MEREDA Public Policy Committee will be discussing these recommendations and the language of the proposed bill to enact them (not yet available) at our upcoming meetings;
- Support for LD 1639, a Land Redevelopment Bank to allow municipalities to utilize State resources to purchase land and clean it up for redevelopment. This program is modeled in part on a successful program in Sanford, Maine and is sponsored by Rep. Melanie Sachs from Freeport;
- Attention to legislation to update Maine's water quality standards, revise height calculations for buildings in the Shoreland Zone, amend the Site Location of Development Act to encourage more expeditious review, and other proposals by the Maine Department of Environmental Protection and bills before the Environment and Natural Resources Committee;
- Potential changes to Maine's landlord-tenant law or other real estate ownership laws; and
- Opportunities for financing affordable housing as part of the State's receipt of over \$1 billion in federal infrastructure funds as well as an \$830 million state surplus.

In addition to these bills and proposals, we will be on the lookout for other legislation that might be of interest to MEREDA members. As always, please let us know if you are aware of any legislation of which MEREDA should be aware!

Participating Remotely

The virtual process is very accessible, and MEREDA members are welcome to participate online by watching legislative proceedings on the Legislature's YouTube Channel, or reviewing the status of a particular bill here by entering number of the LD into the search box in the center of the screen.





- Finding information about a bill (by LD number). The Legislature has a new search function in the middle of the page - it says: "Help us test our new consolidated bill tracking data page." This is a great new search function that will take you to a page with all the information you need about a bill - it is a definite improvement from the old search function, which is still available.
- House and Senate Sessions (held occasionally): [Legislature's primary website](#) under "Senate Video" and "House Video" at the top of the landing page (shown above)
- All Committee Work: [Legislature's YouTube Channel](#) – note that committee hearings sometimes start a few minutes late and unfortunately there will be no icon to click until they have gone live – if you don't see a scheduled hearing under a committee page at the scheduled time, keep refreshing – it should come up eventually!

The MEREDA Legislative Database

This document serves as a one-stop shop for MEREDA members to see what bills have been identified by our advocacy team as potentially relevant to our organization. Since this is the first issue of the MEREDA newsletter for 2022, please find below an overview of the information you might find in the database and what it means. In the database, you will find the bills listed numerically by their "legislative document" or "LD" number. This is the standard reference number of items of legislation in Maine. The title, sponsor, and a summary are also provided.

In the "**Status**" column, you can see the current procedural posture of a bill. The following notations and abbreviations may be used:

- **SAT Carry-over**: bills carried over on the Special Appropriations Table. These are LD's that have moved all the way through to final enactment but have not yet been finally enacted for consideration of their price tag (known as the fiscal note). Currently there are about 237 bills on the Special Appropriations Table with an aggregate price tag of



over \$1 billion. We do not yet know how much money the Legislature will have to spend on these bills but in recent years the total has been as low as \$10,000.

- **Carry-over; Concept draft:** concept drafts are bills that were printed with no language, just a summary. Many of these bills will not have language presented until a public hearing has been scheduled. We watch diligently for language to be released by sponsors and committees.
- **Carry-over on unfinished business:** bills that were moved through the committee process to the floor of the House and Senate but not finally enacted on by those bodies after having been placed on the unfinished business calendar. These will be taken up again by the House and Senate when they reconvene in person.
- **PH:** public hearing date and time - when public input will be taken
- **WS:** work session date and time – when legislators discuss the merits of a proposal and ultimately vote on the committee’s recommendation. Committee recommendations can be unanimous, or “divided.” When a report is divided, it means that the committee was not unanimous. Typically, one report will be the “majority report,” meaning it received a majority of support on the committee, where one or more additional reports will be “minority reports.” Both unanimous and divided reports take the following form, which can also be seen in the status column when a bill has been reported out of committee:
 - **Ought to Pass** – A supportive vote that the language of a bill as printed ought to pass to be enacted
 - **Ought to Pass as Amended:** A supportive vote that the language of a bill ought to pass to be enacted as amended by one or more amendment offered by the Committee.
 - **Ought not to Pass:** An opposing vote that a bill should be rejected by the legislature.

The “**Position**” column indicates MEREDA’s position on a specific bill. The position may be one of the following:

- **Support with testimony**
- **Oppose with testimony**
- **Monitor/Support** – indicates MEREDA leans toward supporting but will not actively engage unless necessary (typically a matter of interest to members for business reasons but not necessarily specific to architectural professional matters).
- **Monitor/Oppose** – indicates MEREDA leans toward opposition but will not actively engage unless necessary (typically a matter of interest to members for business reasons but not necessarily specific to architectural professional matters).
- **Monitor** – Indicates MEREDA is interested in learning more about the bill but does not have enough information to take a position or is waiting to see if the bill is amended in a way that interests MEREDA

We know this is a lot of information at once, but we hope it can serve as a reminder for those of you who are familiar with MEREDA’s advocacy and for an introduction for those who are not. We welcome your feedback! As always, please feel free to reach out to Elizabeth if you have any questions!

