

LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY



Maine Real Estate &
Development Association

Supporting Responsible Development

Legislative Update – Winter 2024

December 5, 2024

MEREDA's Public Policy Committee continues to stay engaged on critical matters impacting our members.

132nd Legislature Sworn in, Cloture set for January 10, 2025; Constitutional Officers Elected

On Wednesday, December 4, all members of the 132nd Legislature were sworn in, beginning the official activity for the First Regular Session. Additionally, the legislature has set the deadline for bill submission as January 10, 2025. The final makeup of the legislative leadership for the 132nd Legislature and its schedule is as follows:

- **House of Representatives Speaker Ryan Fecteau** (Biddeford)
 - **Majority Leader:** Matt Moonen (Portland)
 - **Assistant Majority Leader:** Lori Gramlich (Old Orchard Beach)
 - **Minority Leader:** Billy Bob Faulkingham of Winter Harbor
 - **Assistant Minority Leader:** Katrina Smith (Palermo)
- **Senate President Mattie Daughtry** (Brunswick)
 - **Majority Leader:** Theresa Pierce (Falmouth)
 - **Assistant Majority Leader:** Jill Duson (Portland)
 - **Minority Leader:** Trey Stewart (Presque Isle)
 - **Assistant Minority Leader:** Matt Harrington (Sanford)



December 4,
2024

Swearing-in of
legislators for
132nd
Legislature;
election of
constitutional
officers



January 8, 2025

First day of
session activities



January 10, 2025

Cloture
(deadline) for bill
submissios for
the 132nd
Legislature



June 18, 2025

Statutory
adjournment
date (can be
extended by up
to ten legislative
days).

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In addition, legislators held a joint session to elect Maine's constitutional officers:

Attorney General: Aaron Frey fended off challenger Meghan Maloney (DA of Kennebec County) to keep his position as the state's AG for the next two years.

Auditor: Matt Dunlap went unchallenged to keep his position for two more years.

Secretary of State: Shenna Bellows also went unchallenged to keep her position for two more years.

Treasurer: This was an open election following the departure of Henry Beck as State Treasurer. Joe Perry of Bangor defeated Mo Terry of Gorham to take the position for the next two years. Joe Perry was just re-elected to serve in the 132nd Legislature from Bangor, so there will be a special election for his seat.

In related news, the former Public Advocate (who works on behalf of the consumers of public utilities) announced on December 5 that he is retiring, and his position will be filled by former State Senator Heather Sanborn.

MEREDA Legislative Agenda Takes Shape

- **HOME Act.** MEREDA is hoping to advance a bold initiative to spur workforce housing creation in Maine. While still being finalized, the Housing Opportunities for Modest Earners (HOME Act) is designed to incentivize affordable and workforce housing without the need for a direct government subsidy. To achieve this goal, MEREDA is seeking to permit a density bonus for residential projects based on the income-eligibility of the residential population. Alternatively, a smaller minimum lot size may be applied if that has a greater density impact on the project.
- **Historic Tax Credit.** MEREDA is teaming up with Maine Preservation to advocate for an expansion of the Maine Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit. This legislation represents a combined version of two bills that passed the most recent legislature but did not receive funding. The new bill would expand the small project credit, create a homeowner credit, expedite the credit claim period for substantial projects, and eliminate the sunset date on the program (currently 2030).
- **Wild Card.** MEREDA is pursuing a third legislative initiative, awaiting the release of a pending study from the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future. That

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study will address recommendations and pathways to achieving the housing creation needs identified in the recently commissioned Housing Production Needs Study from Maine Housing. That study is likely to flesh out several policy solutions to catalyzing housing creation in Maine, and MEREDA will look for critical opportunities in that report before finalizing our policy agenda.

MEREDA will continue to remain diligent in protecting its members' interests. Our members represent a critical pillar of the state economy, and we will continue to advocate for policies that are fair, practical, and predictable. We encourage all those who are interested in rolling up their sleeves and helping to further MEREDA's mission and vision in policymaking to contact Shelly R. Clark, MEREDA's Executive Director at info@mereda.org.

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