

Quarterly Issues List for WKIT
January 1st through March 31st, 2022

The following report identifies this quarter's issues as:

- CORONAVIRUS
 - Even as hospitalizations continue to decline in the state, Covid-19 continues to be the primary issue effecting people across Maine. During this quarter we've kept our listeners up to date on the latest, daily figures from the Maine CDC, including new cases, the latest deaths related to the novel coronavirus, and recent vaccination numbers.
- PFAS
 - Another health issue affecting our listening audience is the risk of per- and polyfluorinated substances, or "PFAS". These substances, often referred to as "forever chemicals", are a class of thousands of chemicals that are used in products such as nonstick cookware, water- or stain-resistant textiles, grease-resistant food packaging, and firefighting foam. We've kept our audience up to date on the state's efforts to test, manage, and respond to PFAS contamination.
- CHILD WELFARE
 - 2021 had the highest recorded number of deaths in Maine in 14 years. Recently, several bills have advanced in the Maine legislature aimed at extending support to families and investing millions of dollars into child protection programs. These efforts have been reported on in our daily newscasts.
- UTILITY OVERSIGHT
 - Utility prices have risen by a drastic amount for Maine power customers since the new year. In February, Governor Janet Mills introduced a bill to clamp down on electric utility performance with penalties that could include a forced dismantling and sale of assets. The proposal could emerge as an alternative to a referendum drive calling for the creation of a consumer-owned utility to replace CMP and Versant Power. We kept our listeners up to date on both efforts this past quarter.
- RIGHT WHALE PROTECTIONS
 - The state's Lobster industry continues to grapple with federal regulations aimed at protecting the endangered right whale. Last year the fight came to a head with a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court. We've kept our audience up to date on the latest developments.

WZLO, Bangor, ME, airs local newscasts **Monday-Friday at the top of every hour between 6am and 8am. Afternoon newscasts are aired at 12pm.** The following news

scripts are aired on the following dates, but **the times they're read are at the total discretion of the anchor**. This listing is by no means exhaustive, and the order in which the issues appear does not reflect any priority or significance.

MAINE'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION AND THE GOVERNOR SAY THE STATE'S LOBSTER FISHERMEN NEED MORE TIME TO COMPLY WITH NEW RULES DESIGNED TO PROTECT NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALES. THE WHALES, WHICH NUMBER LESS THAN 340, ARE VULNERABLE TO ENTANGLEMENT IN FISHING GEAR. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IS USING THE RULES TO IMPOSE NEW RESTRICTIONS ON WHEN LOBSTER FISHERMEN CAN FISH AND WHAT KINDS OF GEAR THEY CAN USE. GOVERNOR JANET MILLS AND THE FOUR-MEMBER DELEGATION SAID WEDNESDAY THAT ONE OF THE RULES, WHICH REQUIRES WEAK POINTS IN LOBSTER LINES, IS ESSENTIALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR FISHERMEN TO COMPLY WITH AT THIS TIME.

SEVERAL PROTECTED ZONES OFF THE EAST COAST THAT ARE DESIGNED TO AID RARE WHALES ARE SET TO EXPIRE IN THE COMING DAYS. THE ZONES ARE VOLUNTARY SLOW ZONES MEANT TO PREVENT NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALES FROM COLLIDING WITH SHIPS. THE WHALES NUMBER LESS THAN 340 AND HAVE SUFFERED HIGH MORTALITY IN RECENT YEARS. MARINERS ARE ASKED TO AVOID THE AREAS ALTOGETHER OR TRANSIT THROUGH THEM SLOWLY. THE FIRST OF THE ZONES, LOCATED EAST OF BOSTON, EXPIRED ON TUESDAY.

THE MAINE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION IS CONSIDERING TOUGHER NEW STANDARDS FOR ELECTRIC UTILITY PERFORMANCE THAT ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE PROPOSED BY LAWMAKERS. THE PANEL WILL HOLD A PUBLIC HEARING NEXT MONTH ON THE PROPOSAL TO MEASURE PERFORMANCE RELATED TO SERVICE INTERRUPTIONS, CUSTOMER SERVICE, BILLING ERRORS, AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION. THE PROPOSAL IS SIMILAR TO A BILL SPONSORED BY GOVERNOR JANET MILLS THAT WOULD IMPOSE PENALTIES FOR POOR PERFORMANCE.

MAINE LAWMAKERS ARE CONSIDERING A PROPOSAL THAT WOULD CREATE AN ADVISORY COUNCIL TO HELP CORRAL RISING ENERGY COSTS. SENATOR ELOISE VITELLI OF ARROWSIC HAS PROPOSED THE CREATION OF THE COUNCIL, WHICH SHE HAS SAID WOULD REVIEW UTILITY RATES AND CRAFT A PLAN TO MAKE SURE MAINERS ARE ABLE TO AFFORD THEIR ENERGY BILLS. SUPPORTERS OF THE PROPOSAL HAVE SAID THE COUNCIL WOULD ALSO REVIEW RELIEF PROGRAMS THAT ASSIST SENIORS AND OTHERS IN PAYING THEIR BILLS. A LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE HAS VOTED IN FAVOR OF THE PROPOSAL, BUT IT WILL NEED THE APPROVAL OF THE FULL LEGISLATURE.

COVID

3/28

PA

COVID-19 HOSPITALIZATIONS REMAIN ON THE DECLINE IN MAINE. ON SUNDAY, THE MAINE CENTER DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED THAT 92 PEOPLE ARE IN THE HOSPITAL WITH THE VIRUS, THE LOWEST WE'VE SEEN IN THE STATE IN SEVEN MONTHS. 17 PEOPLE ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 4 ARE ON VENTILATORS. NEARLY 500 NEW DOSES OF CORONAVIRUS VACCINE WERE ADMINISTERED SATURDAY, ACCORDING TO THE STATE'S VACCINATION DASHBOARD.

DOZENS OF FAIRFIELD RESIDENTS TURNED OUT TO A PUBLIC HEARING WEDNESDAY TO SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS ON A \$47 MILLION PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE CLEAN PUBLIC WATER. A PLAN PUBLISHED BY DIRIGO ENGINEERING, WHICH IS BASED IN FAIRFIELD, SUGGESTS EXTENDING AND UPGRADING THE EXISTING KENNEBEC WATER DISTRICT PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM. TV5 REPORTS, THE PROJECT WOULD TAKE AT LEAST THREE YEARS, WITH THE COST FUNDED BY GRANTS AND THE FAIRFIELD TAX BASE. THOSE WHO SPOKE WERE MOSTLY AGAINST THE PROJECT, SAYING THEY DO NOT BELIEVE THAT RESIDENTS AFFECTED BY PFAS SHOULD BE THE ONES TO PAY FOR IT. OTHERS TOOK ISSUE WITH THE KENNEBEC WATER DISTRICT'S REQUIREMENT THAT ALL FAIRFIELD RESIDENTS CONNECT TO THE NEW WATER SYSTEM, EVEN THOSE WHO DO NOT CURRENTLY HAVE HIGH LEVELS OF PFAS IN THEIR WELLS. THE FAIRFIELD TOWN COUNCIL ALSO DISCUSSED A REFERENDUM VOTE THAT COULD BE HELD IN JUNE.

THE TOWN OF FAIRFIELD IS HOSTING A PUBLIC HEARING TONIGHT REGARDING A \$47 MILLION PUBLIC WATER PROPOSAL. THE PROPOSAL COMES AS ONGOING SAMPLING HAS FOUND PFAS CONTAMINATION IN MORE THAN 260 WELLS IN FAIRFIELD. A PLAN PUBLISHED BY DIRIGO ENGINEERING, WHICH IS BASED IN FAIRFIELD, SUGGESTS EXTENDING AND UPGRADING THE EXISTING KENNEBEC WATER DISTRICT PUBLIC WATER SYSTEM. THE PROJECT WOULD TAKE AT LEAST THREE YEARS, AND COULD BEGIN AS EARLY AS APRIL. IT WOULD INSTALL MORE THAN 108,000 FEET OF WATER MAIN, AS WELL AS STANDPIPE, BOOSTER CHLORINATION, BLEEDERS, AND FLOW STATIONS. THE REPORT SAYS THE TOTAL COST WOULD BE FUNDED BY GRANTS AND THE FAIRFIELD TAX BASE. TONIGHT'S HEARING IS SCHEDULED FOR 6:30 AT THE FAIRFIELD COMMUNITY CENTER GYMNASIUM. THE PUBLIC WILL BE ABLE TO COMMENT IN-PERSON OR VIRTUALLY.

A LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE HAS FAILED TO COMPROMISE ON THE PROVISIONS OF A UTILITY REFORM BILL THAT SEEKS TO INTRODUCE NEW ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES FOR ELECTRIC COMPANIES IN THE STATE. THE PORTLAND PRESS HERALD REPORTS THE SENATE COMMITTEE MEMBERS WERE SPLIT THREE WAYS ON THE BILL IN A VOTE ON FRIDAY. THAT MEANS THE FULL STATE LEGISLATURE WILL CONSIDER THE DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE BILL WITH A VOTE IN THE SENATE EXPECTED SOMETIME NEXT MONTH. IN FEBRUARY, GOVERNOR JANET MILLS INTRODUCED THE BILL THAT ATTEMPTS TO FIX UTILITY PERFORMANCE ISSUES BY FORCING COMPANIES TO MEET REGULATORY STANDARDS AROUND CUSTOMER SERVICE, COMPLAINTS, RELIABILITY, AND POWER RESTORATION.

SIX MORE MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE CORONAVIRUS HAVE DIED. ACCORDING TO THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL, THE STATE'S DEATH TOLL NOW STANDS AT 2,188. 91 PEOPLE ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS IN MAINE. 19 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 9 ARE ON VENTILATORS. 856 NEW VACCINATIONS WERE ADMINISTERED ON MONDAY. ACCORDING TO THE STATE'S VACCINATION DASHBOARD, 506 WERE BOOSTER SHOTS.

ELEVATED LEVELS OF INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS AND ARSENIC HAVE BEEN DISCOVERED IN WELL WATER NEAR A LANDFILL IN KITTERY. THE PORTSMOUTH HERALD REPORTED SATURDAY THAT ROUTINE CHECKS OF TEST WELLS NEAR THE KITTERY RESOURCE RECOVERY FACILITY SHOWED ELEVATED CONTAMINANT LEVELS AT THREE WELL SITES. THE MAINE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SAYS IT WAS CHECKING FOR INDUSTRIAL "FOREVER CHEMICALS" KNOWN AS PFAS, THAT HAVE BEEN TURNING UP IN PUBLIC WATER SUPPLIES NATIONWIDE.

COVID

3/18

PA

THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 284 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES ON THURSDAY AND 12 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS. 111 PEOPLE ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS IN MAINE. THAT'S THE LOWEST NUMBER OF HOSPITALIZATIONS IN THE STATE SINCE LAST AUGUST. 22 PEOPLE ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 7 ARE ON VENTILATORS. ACCORDING TO THE STATE'S VACCINATION DASHBOARD, MORE THAN 1,800 NEW COVID VACCINES WERE ADMINISTERED ON WEDNESDAY. JUST OVER 1,000 OF THOSE WERE BOOSTER SHOTS.

MAINE FARMERS AND THE COMMISSIONER OF THE MAINE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION, AND FORESTRY HAVE TESTIFIED IN FAVOR OF A PROPOSAL THAT WOULD CREATE A \$100 MILLION FUND TO HELP PAY FOR PROBLEMS CAUSED BY PFAS. THE MAINE LEGISLATURE IS CONSIDERING CREATING THE FUND TO DO THINGS LIKE HELP FARMERS PAY FOR WATER AND SOIL TESTS AND COVER CROP AND ANIMAL LOSSES RELATED TO THE CONTAMINATION OF "FOREVER CHEMICALS". THE MAIN CONCERN FROM SOME OF THOSE WHO TESTIFIED ON THE BILL WEDNESDAY WAS THAT \$100 MILLION WOULDN'T BE ENOUGH. THE PROPOSAL WILL BE SUBJECT TO FUTURE COMMITTEE VOTES.

MAINE'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION WANTS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO HELP FARMERS IN THE STATE MANAGE LONG-LASTING CHEMICAL CONTAMINATION. THE FOUR LAWMAKERS ON MONDAY CALLED ON THE SECRETARY OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE TO MAKE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO RESPOND TO PFAS CONTAMINATION. MAINE AUTHORITIES ARE TRYING TO SAMPLE, TREAT, REMEDIATE, AND MONITOR THE "FOREVER CHEMICALS" IN THE STATE.

MAINE UTILITY REGULATORS HAVE CLOSED AN INVESTIGATION INTO ALLEGATIONS RAISED IN A LAWSUIT AGAINST THE PARENT COMPANY OF CENTRAL MAINE POWER. THE MAINE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION ENDED ITS INVESTIGATION THIS MONTH AFTER A LAWSUIT AGAINST AVANGRID WAS WITHDRAWN. NO EVIDENCE WAS SUBMITTED IN COURT TO BACK A CLAIM THAT THE COMPANY BOUGHT UNNECESSARY EQUIPMENT SO IT COULD CHARGE HIGHER ELECTRICITY RATES AND INCREASE ITS PROFITS. AVANGRID DENIED THE ALLEGATIONS AND DESCRIBED THE PLAINTIFF AS A "DISGRUNTLED EMPLOYEE."

A LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE HEARD RECOMMENDATIONS ON MONDAY FOR AMENDMENTS REGARDING THE REGULATION OF FIRE-SUPPRESSING FOAMS TO WHICH PFAS HAVE BEEN ADDED. PFAS ARE A GROUP OF TOXIC "FOREVER CHEMICALS" THAT HAVE BEEN FOUND IN WELLS AND FIELDS THROUGHOUT THE STATE. THE BILL AMENDS A LAW THAT PROHIBITS THE MAKING AND DISTRIBUTION OF THOSE MATERIALS, TO SAY IT DOES NOT INCLUDE FOAMS DISTRIBUTED FOR MARINE DEFENSE APPLICATIONS, IF THEY'RE ORDERED BY THE U-S DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE. ANOTHER AMENDMENT WOULD REQUIRE THOSE WHO MAKE OR SELL FIRE-SUPPRESSING FOAM TO PROVIDE THE DEP, IF ASKED, WITH A CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE CERTIFYING THE FOAM DOES NOT CONTAIN INTENTIONALLY ADDED PFAS. THE BILL WILL BE DISCUSSED FURTHER DURING A FUTURE WORK SESSION.

A FUNDING PACKAGE, APPROVED BY FEDERAL LAWMAKERS, INCLUDES MORE THAN \$17 MILLION TO HELP THE LOBSTER FISHING INDUSTRY ADJUST TO NEW RULES DESIGNED TO PROTECT ENDANGERED WHALES. THE MONEY IS PART OF THE COMMERCE, JUSTICE, AND SCIENCE APPROPRIATIONS BILL PASSED BY CONGRESS ON THURSDAY. IT INCLUDES \$14 MILLION TO HELP THE LOBSTER INDUSTRY COMPLY WITH THE NEW RULES MEANT TO HELP THE NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALE. MEMBERS OF MAINE'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION SAID THE REST OF THE MONEY INCLUDES \$2 MILLION FOR RESEARCH, MONITORING, AND CONSERVATION EFFORTS.

MAINE'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION IS CALLING FOR THE CREATION OF A FEDERAL GRANT PROGRAM TO HELP THE LOBSTER INDUSTRY COPE WITH NEW RULES DESIGNED TO SAVE WHALES. FEDERAL AUTHORITIES HAVE IMPLEMENTED NEW RESTRICTIONS ON LOBSTER HARVESTING IN HUNDREDS OF MILES OF PRODUCTIVE FISHING WATERS OFF THE MAINE COAST TO TRY TO PROTECT NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALES. MEMBERS OF THE NEW ENGLAND LOBSTER FISHING INDUSTRY, WHICH IS BASED LARGELY IN MAINE, HAVE SAID THE RULES WILL CAUSE SEVERE ECONOMIC HARM TO ONE OF THE REGION'S OLDEST INDUSTRIES. THE LAWMAKERS PROPOSED THE GRANT PROGRAM WITH A BILL ON TUESDAY.

SEVERAL BILLS HAVE ADVANCED IN THE MAINE LEGISLATURE AIMED AT EXTENDING SUPPORT TO FAMILIES AND INVESTING AT LEAST \$2.6 MILLION INTO CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAMS FOLLOWING A RECENT INCREASE IN CHILD DEATHS. THE PORTLAND PRESS HERALD REPORTS THAT THE FOUR BILLS ENDORSED MONDAY WOULD ESTABLISH A PILOT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE LEGAL REPRESENTATION TO FAMILIES WHO ARE INVOLVED IN CHILD SAFETY INVESTIGATIONS. THE BILLS ALSO WOULD INCREASE SUPERVISION OVER CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES. ALL OF THE BILLS WILL FACE A VOTE IN THE HOUSE AND SENATE IN THE COMING WEEKS.

163 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE CORONAVIRUS. A MONTH AGO, THAT FIGURE WAS 346. 41 PEOPLE ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 11 ARE ON VENTILATORS. THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL SAYS 1,064 NEW COVID VACCINES WERE ADMINISTERED ON WEDNESDAY. OF THOSE, 595 WERE BOOSTER SHOTS.

THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL SAYS THE NUMBER OF COVID-HOSPITALIZATIONS IN THE STATE WAS UP SLIGHTLY ON WEDNESDAY, BUT IT'S STILL LESS THAN HALF WHAT IT WAS JUST A MONTH AGO. PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS SAY 162 MAINERS ARE HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. THE LAST TIME HOSPITALIZATION TOTALS WERE THIS LOW WAS BACK IN SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER. 42 PEOPLE ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 11 ARE ON VENTILATORS, THE LOWEST NUMBER SINCE EARLY AUGUST. 13 MORE MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS HAVE DIED.

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS WANTS THE STATE'S BUSIEST AIRPORT TO GET RID OF ADVERTISEMENTS THAT ARE MEANT TO DISCOURAGE PEOPLE FROM EATING SEAFOOD. "PEOPLE FOR THE ETHICAL TREATMENT OF ANIMALS", WHICH IS KNOWN FOR PROVOCATIVE ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS, PURCHASED THE ADS AT PORTLAND INTERNATIONAL JETPORT. THEY SHOW WHALES ENTANGLED IN FISHING GEAR AND INCLUDE THE WORDS "SAVE THE WHALES: DON'T EAT FISH." GOVERNOR JANET MILLS SENT A LETTER TO THE AIRPORT'S DIRECTOR STATING THAT THE ADVERTISEMENTS ARE MEANT TO UNDERMINE "A VITAL AND ICONIC SECTOR OF OUR STATE'S ECONOMY." THE ADS ARE SLATED TO COME DOWN SATURDAY EITHER WAY.

MAINE LAWMAKERS ARE CONSIDERING A PROPOSAL TO LIMIT THE WORKLOAD OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES CASEWORKERS TO TRY TO PREVENT BURNOUT. THE BILL WOULD REQUIRE THE STATE TO MAKE SURE CASEWORKERS AREN'T WORKING MORE THAN 60 HOURS OVER SEVEN CONSECUTIVE DAYS OR 70 HOURS OVER EIGHT CONSECUTIVE DAYS. LAST YEAR WAS THE WORST YEAR ON RECORD FOR CHILD DEATHS IN MAINE.

THE DIRECTOR OF THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL SAYS THE FIRST TWO CASES OF THE BA.2 VARIANT OF COVID-19 HAVE BEEN DETECTED HERE IN MAINE. DR. NIRAV SHAH SAYS THE CASES WERE IDENTIFIED THROUGH WORK WITH THE JACKSON LAB, AND THEIR DISCOVERY WAS NOT UNEXPECTED. W-M-T-W REPORTS BA.2 IS ONE OF THE SO-CALLED SUB-LINEAGES OF THE OMICRON VARIANT AND HAS BEEN TERMED A "VARIANT OF CONCERN" BY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION. EARLY DATA SUGGESTS IT IS MORE CONTAGIOUS THAN BA.1, WHICH IS THE CURRENT OMICRON VARIANT DOMINANT IN THE U-S. SHAH SAYS RECENT DATA SUGGESTS PRIOR INFECTION WITH OMICRON PROTECTS AGAINST REINFECTION FROM BA.2, BUT THE EXTENT OF THAT PROTECTION IS UNCLEAR. HE ALSO SAYS THAT RESEARCH IS STILL BEING DONE TO LEARN HOW EFFECTIVE CURRENT VACCINES ARE AGAINST BA.2. AS OF MONDAY, THE MAINE C-D-C SAID 168 MAINERS WITH COVID-19 WERE IN THE HOSPITAL, 39 WERE IN CRITICAL CARE. 13 WERE ON VENTILATORS.

A MAINE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE HAS APPROVED A HOST OF CHANGES TO THE STATE'S CHILD WELFARE SERVICES OMBUDSMAN PROGRAM. THE PROGRAM IS DESIGNED TO FUNCTION AS AN INDEPENDENT CONNECTION BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND THE STATE'S CHILD PROTECTION SYSTEM. A BILL BEFORE THE MAINE LEGISLATURE WOULD MAKE SEVERAL CHANGES TO THE PROGRAM, INCLUDING ADDING STAFFING AND FUNDING. SUPPORTERS SAY THE CHANGES WOULD ALSO SEEK TO MAKE SURE THE PROGRAM PROVIDES INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MAINE D-H-H-S AND THE LEGISLATURE. THE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE VOTED IN FAVOR OF THE CHANGES ON THURSDAY.

MAINE AGRICULTURE GROUPS HAVE RAISED THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS FOR AN EMERGENCY RELIEF FUND FOR FARMERS AFFECTED BY PFAS, A GROUP OF TOXIC CHEMICALS CONTAMINATING WELLS AND FIELDS THROUGHOUT THE STATE. THE PORTLAND PRESS HERALD REPORTS THAT GROUPS LIKE THE MAINE ORGANIC FARMERS AND GARDENERS ASSOCIATION RAISED \$255,000 TO AID FARMERS WHO HAVE HAD TO REMOVE THEIR PRODUCTS OFF MARKET SHELVES WHILE TESTING FOR THE "FOREVER CHEMICALS". THE FUND WILL PROVIDE SHORT-TERM INCOME REPLACEMENT WHILE THE STATE WORKS TO CREATE A LONG-TERM ASSISTANCE FUND. IT'LL ALSO HELP FARMERS PAY FOR INDEPENDENT PFAS TESTING.

CORONAVIRUS

2/28

PA

COVID-HOSPITALIZATIONS WERE DOWN IN MAINE SUNDAY FOR THE FIFTH DAY CONSECUTIVE DAY. THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL SAYS 168 MAINERS ARE HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. JUST A MONTH AGO, THAT NUMBER WAS 400. 40 PEOPLE REMAIN IN CRITICAL CARE. 13 ARE ON VENTILATORS

MAINE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL HAS OFFICIALLY SURPASSED 2,000. ON THURSDAY, THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 53 NEW DEATHS. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, 2,024 PEOPLE TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS HAVE DIED. PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS ALSO ANNOUNCED OVER 1,100 NEW CASES YESTERDAY. 191 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 42 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 15 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE HOSPITALIZED WITH CORONAVIRUS IN MAINE CONTINUES TO DECLINE. ON THURSDAY, THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED JUST 191 HOSPITALIZATIONS. THAT'S THE STATE'S LOWEST NUMBER SINCE MID-OCTOBER 2020. 42 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 15 ARE ON VENTILATORS. PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS ALSO ANNOUNCED OVER 1,100 NEW CASES YESTERDAY AND 53 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS. MAINE'S DEATH TOLL NOW STANDS AT 2,024.

THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED OVER 1,100 NEW CASES ON THURSDAY AND 53 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS. MAINE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL NOW STANDS AT 2,024. 191 MAINERS ARE HOSPITALIZATIZED WITH THE VIRUS. THAT'S THE STATE'S LOWEST NUMBER SINCE MID-OCTOBER. 42 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 15 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

MAINE FARMERS WANT LAWMAKERS TO PASS A BILL BANNING FERTILIZER AND COMPOST CONTAINING WASTEWATER SLUDGE THAT'S BEEN LINKED TO TOXIC "FOREVER CHEMICALS". THE PORTLAND PRESS HERALD REPORTS FARMING FAMILIES HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE WEDNESDAY IN FRONT OF THE STATE CAPITOL TO ASK LAWMAKERS TO SUPPORT LEGISLATION THAT WOULD BAN FERTILIZER CONTAINING THE UNTREATED SLUDGE. PFAS ARE INDUSTRIAL COMPOUNDS ASSOCIATED WITH SERIOUS HEALTH CONDITIONS AND CAN MAKE THEIR WAY INTO THE WATER AND FOOD SUPPLY. THE STATE ESTIMATES \$20 MILLION IN ANNUAL COSTS FOR PFAS TESTING.

THE MAINE LEGISLATURE'S COMMITTEE ON MARINE RESOURCES VOTED AGAINST A PROPOSAL ON TUESDAY TO CREATE A LEGAL DEFENSE FUND TO HELP THE STATE'S LOBSTER FISHING INDUSTRY FIGHT NEW RESTRICTIONS. THE FUND WOULD HAVE BEEN DESIGNED TO HELP THE INDUSTRY CHALLENGE RULES AND REGULATIONS INTENDED TO PROTECT THE NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALE. REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAM FAULKINGHAM, A COMMERCIAL LOBSTERMAN, PROPOSED THE IDEA. IT WOULD HAVE REDIRECTED FEES AND SURCHARGES THE STATE USES TO MANAGE THE LOBSTER FISHING INDUSTRY. HE SAYS HE'LL BRING BACK THE PROPOSAL WITH A NEW APPROACH.

11 MORE MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE CORONAVIRUS HAVE DIED. MAINE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL NOW STANDS AT 1,971. THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED OVER 1,500 NEW CASES ON WEDNESDAY, BRINGING MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS TO 222,925. 211 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 41 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 16 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

MAINE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL ROSE TO 1,971 ON WEDNESDAY AS 11 MORE PEOPLE TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS HAVE DIED. YESTERDAY, THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL ANNOUNCED OVER 1,500 NEW CASES. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS NOW STANDS AT 222,925. 211 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 41 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 16 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

THE NUMBER OF COVID-HOSPITALIZATIONS IN MAINE WAS DOWN SLIGHTLY ON WEDNESDAY. 211 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. THAT'S DOWN 13 FROM THE DAY BEFORE. 41 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE, 7 FEWER THAN TUESDAY. 16 ARE ON VENTILATORS. 11 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS WERE ANNOUNCED YESTERDAY, BRINGING MAINE'S DEATH TOLL TO 1,971. THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL ALSO ANNOUNCED OVER 1,500 NEW CASES.

THE NUMBER OF COVID-HOSPITALIZATIONS IN MAINE HAS BEEN ON THE DECLINE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THIS MONTH, BUT IT WAS UP SLIGHTLY TUESDAY. THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL SAYS 224 PEOPLE ARE HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS IN MAINE. 48 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 18 ARE ON VENTILATORS. ON TUESDAY, PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS ANNOUNCED 3,039 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES. NO DEATHS WERE REPORTED.

THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 3,039 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES ON TUESDAY AND NO NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS NOW STANDS AT ROUGHLY 221,400. THE NUMBER OF COVID HOSPITALIZATIONS IN THE STATE WAS UP SLIGHTLY ON TUESDAY. PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS SAY 224 PEOPLE ARE HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS IN MAINE. 48 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 18 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

MAINE LAWMAKERS ARE GOING TO CONSIDER MORE FUNDING TO FIGHT "FOREVER CHEMICALS" AS MORE FARMS DISCOVER CONTAMINATION. THE GROUP OF CHEMICALS KNOWN AS "PFAS" HAVE BEEN FOUND IN HUNDREDS OF FARM SITES WHERE SLUDGE OR PAPERMAKING WASTE CONTAINING THE TOXINS WAS SPREAD. PFAS ARE ALSO BEING FOUND IN WELLS AND LANDFILLS. THE CHEMICAL IS LINKED TO CANCER AND OTHER HEALTH PROBLEMS. GOVERNOR JANET MILLS IS PROPOSING TO ADD ANOTHER \$9 MILLION INTO FIGHTING THE CONTAMINATION, WITH MORE THAN A THIRD GOING TO IMPROVED TESTING. THAT'S ON TOP OF \$30 MILLION ALREADY IN THE BUDGET DEDICATED TO TESTING AND MITIGATION EFFORTS.

MAINE LAWMAKERS ARE CONSIDERING A BILL TO HELP RESIDENTS WHO ARE HAVING DIFFICULTY PAYING THEIR ELECTRICITY BILLS. THE PROPOSAL FROM SENATOR ELOISE VITELLI WOULD REQUIRE THE MAINE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION TO CREATE AN ELECTRIC UTILITY RELIEF PROGRAM FOR LOW-INCOME MAINERS. IT WOULD ALSO REQUIRE THE PUBLIC ADVOCATE TO CREATE A NEW COMMISSION TO REVIEW UTILITY RATES. THE BILL IS SEPARATE FROM UTILITY RELIEF THAT WAS ANNOUNCED LAST WEEK. THE MAINE PUC, ON THURSDAY, APPROVED CREDITS FOR 90,000 LOW-INCOME RATEPAYER AS A ONE-TIME GIVEBACK.

THE MAINE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION IS PROVIDING ONE-TIME RATE RELIEF FOR 90,000 LOW-INCOME CUSTOMERS FOLLOWING A LARGE INCREASE IN ELECTRIC BILLS. CENTRAL MAINE POWER AND VERSANT POWER CUSTOMERS, WHO UTILIZE THE "STANDARD OFFER", SAW BILLS INCREASE BY ABOUT \$30 PER MONTH. THE \$8 MILLION IN RATE RELIEF, APPROVED THURSDAY, WILL GO TO CUSTOMERS WITH HOUSEHOLD INCOMES AT OR BELOW 150% OF FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES. QUALIFIED RECIPIENTS CAN EXPECT A ONE-TIME CREDIT AUTOMATICALLY APPLIED TO THEIR ELECTRIC BILL BY THE END OF MARCH.

THE MAINE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION HAS FORMALLY OPENED AN INVESTIGATION INTO HOW EARNINGS DECISIONS ARE DRIVING DECISION-MAKING BY CENTRAL MAINE POWER AND ITS PARENT COMPANY, AVANGRID. COMMISSION CHAIRMAN PHIL BARTLETT SAID THURSDAY THAT C-M-P'S PERFORMANCE HAS IMPROVED BUT THE P-U-C WANTS TO KNOW IF THOSE IMPROVEMENTS ARE SUSTAINABLE. THE DECISION FOLLOWS A PRELIMINARY PROBE AND AUDIT THAT WAS ORDERED IN RESPONSE TO CONCERNS ABOUT CMP'S OWNERSHIP STRUCTURE. IT WASN'T ALL BAD NEWS FOR C-M-P. REGULATORS LIFTED A PENALTY TOTALING ABOUT \$12.5 MILLION AFTER THE COMPANY SHOWED IMPROVEMENTS OVER THE PAST 18 MONTHS.

THE NUMBER OF CORONAVIRUS CASES AND COVID-RELATED DEATHS CONTINUE TO RISE IN MAINE AS THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL WORKS THROUGH ITS BACKLOG. MAINE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL NOW STANDS AT 1,883 AS 25 NEW DEATHS WERE REPORTED. THERE WERE ALSO 3,784 NEWLY-RECORDED CASES, BRINGING MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS TO ROUGHLY 206,000. 247 PEOPLE ARE NOW HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS IN MAINE. 63 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 23 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

STATE LAWMAKERS ARE WORKING ON PROPOSALS TO OFFER RELIEF TO MAINERS WHO HAVE SEEN A SIGNIFICANT JUMP IN SUPPLY RATES ON THEIR ELECTRIC BILLS THIS YEAR, BUT SOME SAY IT MIGHT NOT BE ENOUGH. SENATOR ELOISE VITELLI INTRODUCED A BILL TUESDAY AIMED AT CREATING A RELIEF PROGRAM, THROUGH THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION, TO HELP SENIORS AND LOW INCOME MAINERS PAY THEIR BILLS AND ANY LATE FEES. IT WOULD ALSO CREATE A STAKEHOLDER GROUP TO MONITOR UTILITY RATES AND COME UP WITH AFFORDABILITY PLANS IN THE FUTURE. A PUBLIC HEARING ON THE BILL WENT ON FOR SEVERAL HOURS WITH MULTIPLE ORGANIZATIONS AND UTILITY COMPANIES OFFERING TESTIMONY. SOME LAWMAKERS BELIEVE THE BILL'S SCOPE IS TOO NARROW, AND LEAVES OUT MIDDLE INCOME FAMILIES AND BUSINESSES. QUESTIONS ABOUT FUNDING AND RESOURCES ARE EXPECTED TO BE DISCUSSED IN A WORK SESSION NEXT WEEK.

MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF CORONAVIRUS CASES HAS OFFICIALLY SURPASSED 200,000. ON WEDNESDAY, THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 3,556 NEW INFECTIONS, BRINGING MAINE'S TOTAL TO 202,221. HEALTH OFFICIALS SAY THE INCREASE IN CASES IS DUE TO THE PROCESSING OF BACKLOGGED COVID TEST RESULTS. THE MAINE C-D-C WARNS THE NUMBERS WILL REMAIN HIGH FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS. THE NEWLY-RELEASED DATA ALSO SHOWS 9 MORE MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS HAVE DIED. 249 PEOPLE ARE NOW HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS IN MAINE. 63 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 29 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

THE MAINE LEGISLATURE'S COMMITTEE ON MARINE RESOURCES HAS PUT OFF A POTENTIAL VOTE ON A PROPOSAL TO CREATE A LEGAL DEFENSE FUND TO FIGHT NEW FISHING RESTRICTIONS. THE COMMITTEE VOTED ON TUESDAY TO TABLE THE PROPOSAL TO A FUTURE MEETING. THE PLAN WOULD LAUNCH THE DEFENSE FUND TO HELP THE LOBSTER INDUSTRY NAVIGATE THE NEW RULES, LAWS, AND REGULATIONS THAT ARE DESIGNED TO PROTECT RARE NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALES. SOME MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE AND THE LOBSTER INDUSTRY BALKED AT THE IDEA, IN PART BECAUSE IT WOULD REDIRECT FEES AND SURCHARGES THE STATE CURRENTLY USES TO MANAGE THE LOBSTER FISHING INDUSTRY.

AS THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL CONTINUES TO PROCESS A SUBSTANTIAL BACKLOG OF POSITIVE CORONAVIRUS CASES, THE AGENCY HAS LAUNCHED A SYSTEM TO AUTOMATE PART OF THE TASK. BECAUSE OF THAT, THE MAINE C-D-C SAYS THEIR DATA WEBPAGE WILL SHOW A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE DAY-TO-DAY TALLIES OF TOTAL CASES, CONFIRMED CASES, AND PROBABLE CASES. NEARLY 11,000 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES WERE ADDED TO MAINE'S TOTAL ON TUESDAY. THE AGENCY SAYS DEATHS, HOSPITALIZATIONS, AND WASTEWATER SCREENING DATA REMAIN THE BEST METRICS TO DETERMINE THE EVOLVING IMPACT OF COVID-19. TUESDAY'S NEWLY RELEASED DATA SHOWS 21 MORE MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE CORONAVIRUS HAVE DIED. OF THE 260 PEOPLE HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS IN MAINE, 64 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 27 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

STATE REGULATORS SAY MAINE'S LOBSTER INDUSTRY BOUNCED BACK IN 2021 AND SET A RECORD \$725 MILLION FOR THE TOTAL VALUE OF LOBSTERS AT THE DOCKS. THE STATE'S LOBSTER FISHING BUSINESS DIPPED IN 2020, BRINGING IN AROUND \$412 MILLION. THE PER-POUND PRICE OF LOBSTER SOARED LAST YEAR, AND THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE RECORD-HIGH VALUE. REGULATORS ALSO SAY FISHERMEN CAUGHT ABOUT 108 MILLION POUNDS IN 2021, THE MOST SINCE 2018. STILL, THE MAINE LOBSTER INDUSTRY IS GRAPPLING WITH NEW WHALE CONSERVATION RULES, AS WELL AS VOLATILE TRADE MARKETS, AND UNCERTAINTY CAUSED BY WARMING OCEANS.

THE MAINE LEGISLATURE'S COMMITTEE ON MARINE RESOURCES IS SET TO CONSIDER A PAIR OF PROPOSALS FOR HELPING THE LOBSTER INDUSTRY COPE WITH NEW FISHING RESTRICTIONS. ONE PLAN WOULD CREATE A \$30 MILLION FUND TO HELP FISHERMEN ADAPT TO THE NEW RULES, WHICH ARE MEANT TO PROTECT RARE NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALES, WHICH ARE VULNERABLE TO ENTANGLEMENT IN FISHING GEAR. THE OTHER WOULD CREATE A LEGAL DEFENSE FUND TO HELP THE LOBSTER INDUSTRY NAVIGATE THE NEW RULES, LAWS, AND REGULATIONS. BOTH PROPOSALS FACE POTENTIAL VOTES TODAY.

308 MAINERS REMAIN HOSPITALIZED WITH THE CORONAVIRUS, THAT'S NEARLY 100 LESS THAN A MONTH AGO. ACCORDING TO PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS, 66 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 26 ARE ON VENTILATORS. ON THURSDAY, THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,115 NEW CASES. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS NOW STANDS AT 184,614. 3 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS WERE ALSO REPORTED. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, 1,822 MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS HAVE DIED.

MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF CORONAVIRUS CASES SURPASSED 184,600 ON THURSDAY AS THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,115 NEW INFECTIONS. 3 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS WERE ALSO REPORTED, BRINGING MAINE'S DEATH TOLL TO 1,822. PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS SAY 308 PEOPLE ARE HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 66 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 26 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

3 MORE MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE CORONAVIRUS HAVE DIED. MAINE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL NOW STANDS AT 1,822. ON THURSDAY, THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,115 NEW INFECTIONS. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, MAINE HAS RECORDED OVER 184,600 CASES. 308 PEOPLE ARE HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 66 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 26 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

MAINE LAWMAKERS ARE CONSIDERING CREATING A LEGAL DEFENSE FUND TO HELP THE STATE'S LOBSTER INDUSTRY DEAL WITH NEW RULES, LAWS, AND REGULATIONS AIMED AT PROTECTING ENDANGERED NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALES. A PROPOSAL FROM REPRESENTATIVE WILLIAM FAULKINGHAM, A LOBSTERMAN HIMSELF, WOULD ESTABLISH THE FUND AND CREATE A COMMISSION TO ADMINISTER IT. THE PROPOSAL STATES THAT IT WOULD BE FUNDED WITH MONEY FROM LICENSE SURCHARGES AND THE SALE OF LOBSTER TRAP TAGS. THE PROPOSAL WAS THE SUBJECT OF A PUBLIC HEARING TUESDAY AND WILL BE SUBJECT TO FUTURE LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE VOTES.

THE GOVERNOR'S ENERGY OFFICE AND THE MAINE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC ADVOCATE FILED A JOINT PETITION WEDNESDAY TO PROVIDE QUALIFYING LOW-INCOME MAINERS A ONE-TIME CREDIT ON THEIR ELECTRICITY BILL TO OFFSET NEW RATE HIKEs. THEY ARE ASKING THE MAINE P-U-C TO APPROVE A PROGRAM THAT WILL PROVIDE APPROXIMATELY \$8 MILLION OF RATE RELIEF. ACCORDING TO W-M-T-W, THE PROGRAM WOULD HELP 90,000 RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS WITH TWO HOUSEHOLD INCOMES AT OR BELOW 150% OF THE FEDERAL POVERTY GUIDELINES. CENTRAL MAINE POWER AND VERSANT, THE STATE'S TWO MAJOR ELECTRIC UTILITIES, WILL IDENTIFY THE ELIGIBLE CUSTOMERS WITH THE HELP OF THE MAINE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES. THE AMOUNT OF THE BILL CREDIT WILL BE \$90 PER CUSTOMER.

304 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE CORONAVIRUS. THAT'S THE LOWEST NUMBER OF COVID-HOSPITALIZATIONS IN MAINE SINCE BEFORE THANKSGIVING. 70 PEOPLE ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 27 ARE ON VENTILATORS. ON WEDNESDAY, THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,098 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS NOW STANDS AT ROUGHLY 183,500. THE STATE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL ROSE TO 1,819 AS 3 NEW DEATHS WERE REPORTED.

3 MORE MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE CORONAVIRUS HAVE DIED. MAINE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL NOW STANDS AT 1,819. ON WEDNESDAY, THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,098 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES, BRINGING THE STATE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS TO NEARLY 183,500. 304 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE CORONAVIRUS. THAT'S THE LOWEST NUMBER OF COVID-HOSPITALIZATIONS IN MAINE SINCE BEFORE THANKSGIVING. 70 PEOPLE ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 27 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,098 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES ON WEDNESDAY AND 3 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS NOW STANDS AT ROUGHLY 183,500. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, 1,819 MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS HAVE DIED. 304 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE CORONAVIRUS. THAT'S THE LOWEST NUMBER OF COVID-HOSPITALIZATIONS IN MAINE SINCE BEFORE THANKSGIVING. 70 PEOPLE ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 27 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,391 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES ON TUESDAY AND 12 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES NOW STANDS AT ROUGHLY 182,400. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, 1,816 MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS HAVE DIED. 319 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 75 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 29 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

12 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS WERE REPORTED IN MAINE ON TUESDAY. THE STATE'S DEATH TOLL NOW STANDS AT 1,816. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF CORONAVIRUS CASES SURPASSED 182,400 YESTERDAY AS THE STATE ADDED 1,391 NEW INFECTIONS. 319 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 75 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 29 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

THE NUMBER OF COVID-HOSPITALIZATIONS CONTINUES TO DECLINE IN MAINE. PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS SAY, AS OF TUESDAY, 319 PEOPLE ARE BEING TREATED FOR THE VIRUS IN HOSPITALS ACROSS THE STATE. OF THOSE HOSPITALIZED, 85 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 29 ARE ON VENTILATORS. YESTERDAY, MAINE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL TOPPED 1,816 AS THE STATE REPORTED A DOZEN NEW DEATHS. THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL ALSO REPORTED 1,391 NEW CASES. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS NOW STANDS AT MORE THAN 182,400.

MAINE'S JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON MARINE RESOURCES HAS PUT OFF ITS VOTE ON A PLAN TO CREATE A \$30 MILLION FUND TO HELP FISHERMEN COPE WITH NEW FISHING RULES MEANT TO PROTECT WHALES. THE MAINE LOBSTER FISHERY IS SUBJECT TO NEW RULES DESIGNED TO PROTECT NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALES FROM ENTANGLEMENT IN GEAR. A BILL, PROPOSED BY REPRESENTATIVE HOLLY STOVER, WOULD CREATE A RELIEF FUND TO HELP FISHERMEN HURT ECONOMICALLY BY THE NEW RULES PAY FOR EXPENSES SUCH AS BOAT PAYMENTS AND GEAR. THE COMMITTEE VOTED TO TABLE ITS VOTE ON THE PROPOSAL ON TUESDAY SO IT CAN GATHER MORE INFORMATION.

MAINE'S GOVERNOR AND CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION ARE CALLING ON THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO PUSH BACK NEW FISHING RULES SO FISHERMEN CAN BETTER COMPLY WITH THEM. THE NEW RULES REQUIRE FISHERMEN TO START USING WEAKENED ROPE, OR SPECIAL INSERTS TO WEAKEN EXISTING ROPE, BEGINNING IN MAY IN SOME WATERS. THE REGULATIONS ARE AIMED AT PROTECTING CRITICALLY ENDANGERED NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALES. GOVERNOR JANET MILLS AND THE FOUR MEMBERS OF MAINE'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION SAID MONDAY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD PUSH THE CONVERSION DEADLINE FROM MAY 1ST TO JULY 1ST.

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS WANTS TO STRENGTHEN THE OFFICE OF CHILD WELFARE OMBUDSMAN, HIRE MORE CHILD WELFARE WORKERS, AND EXPAND FAMILY SUPPORT. THE PROPOSALS, ANNOUNCED MONDAY, ADDRESS CHILD WELFARE RECOMMENDATIONS AFTER RECORDED CHILD DEATHS DOUBLED LAST YEAR. THE MAINE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES ALREADY HIRED A NATIONAL CHILD-WELFARE ORGANIZATION TO ASSIST WITH RECOMMENDATIONS. THE GOVERNOR WILL INCLUDE FUNDING FOR HER PROPOSALS IN AN UPCOMING SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET.

A PLAN TO CREATE A \$30 MILLION FUND TO HELP MAINE FISHERMEN COPE WITH THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF NEW WHALE CONSERVATION RULES FACES A POSSIBLE KEY VOTE. THE NEW FEDERAL RULES ARE INTENDED TO PROTECT RARE NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALES FROM ENTANGLEMENT IN FISHING GEAR. THE NEW RULES ARE ESPECIALLY CHALLENGING FOR THE STATE'S LOBSTER INDUSTRY, WHICH IS THE BIGGEST OF ITS KIND IN THE COUNTRY. THE MAINE LEGISLATURE'S COMMITTEE ON MARINE RESOURCES IS DUE TO VOTE ON THE PROPOSAL ON TUESDAY.

346 MAINERS REMAIN HOSPITALIZED WITH THE CORONAVIRUS. ACCORDING TO PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS, 80 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 31 ARE ON VENTILATORS. ON THURSDAY, THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED ROUGHLY 1,400 NEW CASES. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS NOW STANDS AT MORE THAN 178,500. 18 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS WERE ALSO REPORTED. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, 1,777 MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS HAVE DIED.

MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF CORONAVIRUS CASES SURPASSED 178,500 ON THURSDAY AS THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED ROUGHLY 1,400 NEW INFECTIONS. 18 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS WERE ALSO REPORTED, BRINGING MAINE'S DEATH TOLL TO 1,777. PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS SAY 346 PEOPLE ARE HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 80 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 31 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

18 MORE MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE CORONAVIRUS HAVE DIED. MAINE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL NOW STANDS AT 1,777. ON THURSDAY, THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED roughly 1,400 NEW INFECTIONS. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, MAINE HAS RECORDED OVER 178,500 CASES. 346 PEOPLE ARE HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 80 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 31 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS IS INTRODUCING A BILL TO CLAMP DOWN ON ELECTRIC UTILITY PERFORMANCE WITH PENALTIES THAT COULD INCLUDE A FORCED DISMANTLING AND SALE OF ASSETS. MILLS SAID WEDNESDAY THE STATE CURRENTLY DOESN'T HAVE THE TOOLS FOR HOLDING UTILITIES ACCOUNTABLE. SHE SAID IT'S TIME FOR A NEW APPROACH. THE PROPOSAL COULD EMERGE AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO A REFERENDUM DRIVE CALLING FOR THE CREATION OF A CONSUMER-OWNED UTILITY TO REPLACE CENTRAL MAINE POWER AND VERSANT POWER. HER BILL INCLUDES THAT AS A POSSIBILITY, BUT ONLY FOR UTILITIES THAT "CONSISTENTLY FAIL TO MEET THE REQUIREMENTS" SET FORTH BY REGULATORS. CENTRAL MAINE POWER CALLED THE BILL "UNNECESSARY".

THE MAINE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES SAYS THAT CHILD DEATHS INCREASED LAST YEAR, MAKING 2021 THE HIGHEST RECORDED NUMBER OF DEATHS IN THE STATE DATING BACK TO 2007. THE BANGOR DAILY NEWS REPORTED WEDNESDAY THAT UPDATED DATA, RELEASED LAST WEEK FROM AN ANNUAL D-H-H-S REPORT, SAID THAT 25 CHILDREN DIED IN INCIDENTS THAT THE STATE RECORDED WERE ASSOCIATED WITH ABUSE OR NEGLECT OR AFTER A HISTORY OF FAMILY INVOLVEMENT WITH THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM. A D-H-H-S SPOKESPERSON SAID THAT THE ISSUES THE DEPARTMENT FACED IN 2020 CONTINUED INTO THE SECOND YEAR OF THE PANDEMIC. THE STATE SAID IT RELEASED THE REPORT TO BE TRANSPARENT ABOUT CHILD DEATHS.

THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL SAYS IT WILL END CONTACT TRACING OF COVID CASES IN LESS THAN A WEEK'S TIME. MAINE C-D-C DIRECTOR DR. NIRAV SHAH SAYS ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8TH, HIS AGENCY WILL STOP THE PROGRAM THAT WAS, AT ONE POINT, A KEY TOOL IN FIGHTING THE SPREAD OF THE VIRUS. HE SAYS THE OMICRON VARIANT OF THE CORONAVIRUS SPREADS TOO QUICKLY FOR CONTACT TRACING TO BE EFFECTIVE. DR. SHAH SAYS THE RESPONSIBILITY WILL NOW FALL ON MAINERS, INFECTED BY THE VIRUS, TO GET IN TOUCH WITH CLOSE CONTACTS. TV5 REPORTS CONTACT TRACING WILL STILL BE CONDUCTED IN HOSPITALS, JAILS, AND NURSING HOMES. THE MAINE C-D-C HAS 23 PEOPLE WORKING AS CONTACT TRACERS.

COVID-19 HOSPITALIZATIONS ARE DOWN IN THE STATE. THE MAINE CDC SAYS 344 PEOPLE ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 83 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 38 ARE ON VENTILATORS. ACCORDING TO THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL, 8 MORE MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE CORONAVIRUS HAVE DIED. MAINE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL NOW STANDS AT 1,759. 1,340 NEW CASES WERE ALSO REPORTED YESTERDAY. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, MAINE HAS RECORDED ROUGHLY 170,100 INFECTIONS.

MEMBERS OF MAINE'S FISHING INDUSTRY AND STATE REGULATORS HAVE TESTIFIED IN FAVOR OF THE CREATION OF A NEW \$30 MILLION FUND TO HELP LOBSTER FISHERMEN COPE WITH NEW RULES MEANT TO PROTECT WHALES. FEDERAL RULES MAKE AN APPROXIMATELY 950-SQUARE-MILE AREA OF THE GULF OF MAINE ESSENTIALLY OFF-LIMITS TO LOBSTER FISHING FROM OCTOBER TO JANUARY. A PROPOSAL FROM REPRESENTATIVE HOLLY STOVER WOULD CREATE THE FUND TO PROVIDE GRANTS TO LOBSTERMEN AND OTHER FISHERMEN AFFECTED BY THE RULES. THE PROPOSAL WAS THE SUBJECT OF A PUBLIC HEARING TUESDAY AND WOULD REQUIRE VOTES IN COMMITTEE.

MAINE'S UPCOMING BUDGET PROPOSAL MAY HAVE \$20 MILLION IN IT TO FIGHT AGAINST PFAS AS MORE OF THE "FOREVER CHEMICALS" ARE DISCOVERED IN LAND AND WATER. THE BANGOR DAILY NEWS REPORTS THAT THE MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR PROJECT WOULD SAMPLE, TREAT, REMEDIATE, AND MONITOR THE CHEMICALS. STATE OFFICIALS SAID THAT IT WILL LIKELY TAKE UNTIL AT LEAST 2025 TO TEST ALL OF THE SITES THAT HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED FOR CONTAMINATION. EXPOSURE TO HIGH LEVELS OF PFAS HAVE BEEN LINKED TO INCREASED RISKS OF CANCER.

13 MORE MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE CORONAVIRUS HAVE DIED. THE DEATHS WERE REPORTED TUESDAY BY THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL. MAINE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL NOW STANDS 1,751. 1,534 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES WERE ALSO REPORTED YESTERDAY, BRINGING THE STATE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS TO 175,759. 358 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 87 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 34 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

THE STATE OF MAINE IS CONSIDERING SETTING UP A \$30 MILLION ANNUAL FUND TO AID LOBSTER HARVESTERS AND OTHER COMMERCIAL FISHERMEN WHO HAVE BEEN ECONOMICALLY HURT BY NEW RULES DESIGNED TO PROTECT RARE WHALES. NEW FEDERAL RULES MAKE AN APPROXIMATELY 950-SQUARE-MILE AREA OF THE GULF OF MAINE ESSENTIALLY OFF LIMITS TO LOBSTER FISHING FROM OCTOBER TO JANUARY. FEDERAL AUTHORITIES IMPLEMENTED THE RULES TO TRY TO HELP SAVE NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALES, WHICH ARE VULNERABLE TO ENTANGLEMENT IN FISHING GEAR AND NUMBER LESS THAN 340. THE PROPOSAL TO CREATE THE FUND IS UP FOR A PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE A COMMITTEE OF THE MAINE LEGISLATURE TODAY.

MAINE MIGHT START PROHIBITING UTILITIES FROM SUDDENLY DISCONNECTING SERVICE TO PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITIES. A PROPOSAL FROM REPRESENTATIVE SETH BERRY WOULD REQUIRE PUBLIC UTILITIES TO GIVE 60 DAYS ADVANCE WRITTEN NOTICE. THE UTILITIES WOULD ALSO HAVE TO GET AUTHORIZATION FROM THE STATE FIRST. BERRY SAYS THE NEW LAW IS NEEDED TO PROTECT VITAL PUBLIC SAFETY EQUIPMENT USED ON AMBULANCES AND FIRE TRUCKS. THE PROPOSAL WAS SUBJECT TO A PUBLIC HEARING LAST WEEK.

400 MAINERS REMAIN HOSPITALIZED WITH THE CORONAVIRUS. ACCORDING TO PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS, 84 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 38 ARE ON VENTILATORS. ON THURSDAY, THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,526 NEW CASES. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS NOW STANDS AT MORE THAN 171,250. 12 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS WERE ALSO REPORTED. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, 1,728 MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS HAVE DIED.

MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF CORONAVIRUS CASES SURPASSED 171,250 ON THURSDAY AS THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,526 NEW INFECTIONS. 12 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS WERE ALSO REPORTED, BRINGING MAINE'S DEATH TOLL TO 1,728. PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS SAY 400 PEOPLE ARE HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 84 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 38 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

12 MORE MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE CORONAVIRUS HAVE DIED. MAINE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL NOW STANDS AT 1,728. ON THURSDAY, THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,526 NEW INFECTIONS. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, MAINE HAS RECORDED OVER 171,250 CASES. 400 PEOPLE ARE HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 84 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 38 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

THE MAINE CENTER DISEASE FOR CONTROL TESTING LAB'S BACKLOG OF CORONAVIRUS CASES HAS SWELLED TO 56,000. ACCORDING TO TV5, AS A RESULT, MAINE IS FOLLOWING OTHER STATES AND MOVING TOWARD AN AUTOMATED SYSTEM FOR PROCESSING TESTS. MAINE C-D-C DIRECTOR DR. NIRAV SHAH SAID THE SHEER VOLUME OF CASES FROM THE OMICRON VARIANT LEAD TO THE DECISION TO CHANGE COURSE AT THIS POINT. THERE'S NO WORD ON HOW LONG IT WOULD TAKE FOR THE SYSTEM TO BE UP AND RUNNING BUT HE SAID IT WAS AN EXTENSIVE UNDERTAKING. THE BACKLOG OF CASES HAS LED TO ARTIFICIALLY LOW NUMBERS IN MAINE'S OVERALL DAILY CASE COUNT.

THE AUTHORS OF A NEW SCIENTIFIC STUDY SAY GREATER RELIANCE ON GENETIC TESTING OF BABY WHALES AND THEIR MOTHERS MAY HELP SAVE A RARE SPECIES FROM EXTINCTION. CURRENTLY, THERE ARE FEWER THAN 340 NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALES. RESEARCHERS AT THE NEW ENGLAND AQUARIUM IN BOSTON LED THE STUDY. THEY LOOKED AT 13 RIGHT WHALE CALVES IDENTIFIED VIA GENETICS. RESEARCHERS WERE ABLE TO DETERMINE THE AGE OF 12 OF THE WHALES, AND MATCH 11 WITH THEIR MOTHERS. THEY EVEN FOUND THAT FOUR, BELIEVED TO BE DEAD, WERE ACTUALLY STILL ALIVE. RIGHT WHALES HAVE LONG BEEN TRACKED USING PHOTOGRAPHS.

VETO SUSTAINED

1/27

PA

MAINE LAWMAKERS HAVE UPHELD THE GOVERNOR'S VETO OF A BILL THAT WOULD'VE ALLOWED FARM WORKERS TO UNIONIZE. THE BILL PASSED NARROWLY LAST YEAR AND THE VOTE WAS EVEN CLOSER AT 66-67 ON WEDNESDAY IN THE HOUSE, FAILING TO MUSTER A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY TO OVERRIDE THE VETO. REPUBLICANS WERE UNITED IN OPPOSITION. THE SENATE ALSO CONFIRMED THE STATE'S NEW PUBLIC ADVOCATE, WILLIAM HARWOOD. HARWOOD IS A UTILITIES LAWYER WHO SERVED AS A SENIOR ADVISOR IN GOVERNOR JANET MILLS' ENERGY OFFICE.

PFAS = PEEF-OZ

MAINE'S DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION HAS FOUND 'FOREVER CHEMICALS' IN WELLS IN THE TOWN OF KITTERY. ACCORDING TO THE PORTSMOUTH HERALD, LAST MONTH THE D-E-P SAID 10 KITTERY HOMES WILL HAVE TO TEST THEIR WELLS AFTER ROUTINE PFAS TESTING FOUND THE CHEMICALS IN THREE TEST WELLS. THE DEPARTMENT RECENTLY DISCOVERED THAT ONE IN FOUR HOMES CONTAINED HIGH LEVELS OF THE CHEMICALS. AN EMPLOYEE FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S LANDFILL CLOSURE AND REMEDIATION PROGRAM SAID THE TOWN HAS PROVIDED BOTTLED DRINKING WATER FOR RESIDENTS AND WILL POTENTIALLY INSTALL A WATER FILTRATION SYSTEM.

408 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE CORONAVIRUS. 88 PEOPLE ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 38 ARE ON VENTILATORS. ON WEDNESDAY, THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,527 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS NOW STANDS AT 2 SHY OF 170,000. THE STATE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL ROSE TO 1,716 AS 2 NEW DEATHS WERE REPORTED.

2 MORE MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE CORONAVIRUS HAVE DIED. MAINE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL NOW STANDS AT 1,716. ON WEDNESDAY, THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,527 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES, BRINGING THE STATE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS TO NEARLY 170,000. 408 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 88 PEOPLE ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 38 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,527 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES ON WEDNESDAY AND 2 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS NOW STANDS JUST TWO SHY OF 170,000. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, 1,716 MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS HAVE DIED. 408 PEOPLE IN MAINE ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 88 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 38 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,581 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES ON TUESDAY AND 16 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES NOW STANDS AT 168,474. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, 1,714 MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS HAVE DIED. 427 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 100 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 48 ARE ON VENTILATORS. 49 I-C-U- BEDS REMAIN STATEWIDE.

16 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS WERE REPORTED IN MAINE ON TUESDAY. THE STATE'S DEATH TOLL NOW STANDS AT 1,714. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF CORONAVIRUS CASES TOPPED 168,474 YESTERDAY AS THE STATE ADDED 1,581 NEW INFECTIONS. 427 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 100 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 48 ARE ON VENTILATORS. 49 I-C-U-BEDS REMAIN STATEWIDE.

427 PEOPLE ARE BEING TREATED FOR COVID-19 IN HOSPITALS ACROSS MAINE. OF THOSE HOSPITALIZED, 100 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 48 ARE ON VENTILATORS. ON TUESDAY, MAINE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL TOPPED 1,714 AS THE STATE REPORTED 16 NEW DEATHS. THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL ALSO REPORTED 1,581 NEW CASES. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS NOW STANDS AT 168,474.

LOBSTERMEN WILL SOON HAVE TO START USING SPECIAL ROPE, OR INSERTS TO WEAKEN EXISTING ROPE, IN SOME WATERS TO HELP PROTECT CRITICALLY ENDANGERED NORTH ATLANTIC RIGHT WHALES. WHILE THE NEW REGULATIONS BEGIN IN MAY, THE ROPE AND LINKS AREN'T YET READILY AVAILABLE. THAT'S CAUSING DISTRESS AMONG LOBSTERMEN SEEKING TO COMPLY WITH THE RULES. THE MAINE DEPARTMENT OF MARINE RESOURCES HAS RECEIVED NUMEROUS COMPLAINTS THAT THERE ISN'T A SUFFICIENT SUPPLY OF APPROVED ROPES OR THE PLASTIC LINKS. SEVERAL LOBSTERMEN AND THE GOVERNOR WANT NOAA FISHERIES TO DELAY THE NEW RULES.

THOUSANDS OF CUSTOMERS WERE LEFT WITHOUT POWER IN FAR NORTHERN MAINE ON WEDNESDAY DUE TO A DISRUPTION OF ELECTRICITY ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CANADIAN BORDER. VERSANT POWER SAID MORE THAN 11,000 CUSTOMERS WERE AFFECTED. ALMOST ALL OF THOSE WERE IN AROOSTOOK COUNTY. THE UTILITY SAYS CUSTOMERS IN COMMUNITIES INCLUDING FORT KENT, MADAWASKA, FRENCHVILLE, AND SAINT AGATHA WERE DEALING WITH INTERRUPTIONS IN SERVICE. LAST NIGHT, THE UTILITY SAID THE CAUSE OF THE OUTAGES WAS UNKNOWN.

SUPPORTERS OF A REFERENDUM DRIVE AIMED AT ESTABLISHING A CONSUMER-OWNED UTILITY WILL EXTEND THEIR TIME FRAME FOR COLLECTING SIGNATURES, DELAYING A POTENTIAL VOTE UNTIL NEXT YEAR. CANVASSERS FELL SHORT OF THEIR GOAL OF COLLECTING ROUGHLY 63,000 SIGNATURES FOR THE 2022 BALLOT. BUT STEPHANIE CLIFFORD, CAMPAIGN MANAGER FOR "OUR POWER", SAID THEY GATHERED NEARLY THREE-QUARTERS OF THE NEEDED SIGNATURES, AND WILL CONTINUE THEIR EFFORT IN THE COMING MONTHS. THE REFERENDUM DRIVE GATHERED STEAM AFTER GOVERNOR JANET MILLS VETOED A BILL TO BUY-OUT MAINE'S PRIVATELY OWNED ELECTRIC UTILITIES AND REPLACE THEM WITH A CONSUMER-OWNED UTILITY.

THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL SAYS IT HAS A HUGE BACKLOG OF POSITIVE CORONAVIRUS TESTS. AS OF WEDNESDAY, THE AGENCY SAYS THAT NUMBER HAD REACHED MORE THAN 46,000. THE HEAD OF THE MAINE C-D-C DR. NIRAV SHAH SAYS, OVER THE LAST SEVEN DAYS, HIS AGENCY HAS BEEN RECEIVING MORE THAN 3,100 POSITIVE TESTS A DAY. THAT NUMBER AVERAGED 957 JUST THREE WEEKS AGO. SHAH SAYS WHEN YOU ADD IN THE NUMBER OF POSITIVE AT-HOME TESTS, THE DAILY CASE COUNTS THAT MANY RELY ON AS A BAROMETER DON'T SHOW THE TRUE PICTURE OF WHAT'S ACTUALLY GOING ON. AS A RESULT, SHAH SAYS THE MAINE C-D-C IS GOING TO PLACE A LARGER EMPHASIS ON WASTEWATER TESTING IN THE WEEKS AHEAD.

400 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE CORONAVIRUS. 105 PEOPLE ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 50 ARE ON VENTILATORS. 62 I-C-U BEDS REMAIN STATEWIDE. ON WEDNESDAY, THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,550 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS NOW STANDS AT 162,940. THE STATE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL ROSE TO 1,688 AS 30 NEW DEATHS WERE REPORTED.

30 MORE MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE CORONAVIRUS HAVE DIED. MAINE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL NOW STANDS AT 1,688. ON WEDNESDAY, THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,550 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES, BRINGING THE STATE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS TO 162,940. 400 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 105 PEOPLE ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 50 ARE ON VENTILATORS. 62 I-C-U BEDS REMAIN STATEWIDE.

THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,550 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES ON WEDNESDAY AND 30 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS NOW STANDS AT 162,940. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, 1,688 MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS HAVE DIED. 400 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 105 PEOPLE ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 50 ARE ON VENTILATORS. 62 I-C-U BEDS REMAIN STATEWIDE.

THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 538 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES ON TUESDAY AND 14 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES NOW STANDS AT 161,395. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, 1,658 MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS HAVE DIED. 400 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 105 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 50 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

14 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS WERE REPORTED IN MAINE OVER THE LONG HOLIDAY WEEKEND. AS OF TUESDAY, THE STATE'S DEATH TOLL NOW STANDS AT 1,658. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF CORONAVIRUS CASES TOPPED 161,395 YESTERDAY AS THE STATE ADDED 538 NEW INFECTIONS. 400 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 105 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 50 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

400 PEOPLE ARE BEING TREATED FOR COVID-19 IN HOSPITALS ACROSS MAINE. OF THOSE HOSPITALIZED, 105 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 50 ARE ON VENTILATORS. ON TUESDAY, MAINE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL TOPPED 1,658 AS THE STATE REPORTED 14 NEW DEATHS. THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL ALSO REPORTED 538 NEW CASES. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS NOW STANDS AT 161,395.

ANOTHER COVID-HOSPITALIZATION RECORD HAS BEEN SET IN MAINE. THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL SAYS, AS OF THURSDAY, 436 PEOPLE ARE HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS, TOPPING THE RECORD OF 413 SET JUST THE DAY BEFORE. 103 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 53 ARE ON VENTILATORS. YESTERDAY, PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS REPORTED 1,553 NEW CASES. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS NOW STANDS AT 158,087. THREE NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS WERE ALSO REPORTED. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, 1,626 MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS HAVE DIED.

THE NUMBER OF MAINERS HOSPITALIZED WITH COVID-19 HIT A NEW HIGH ON THURSDAY. PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS SAY 436 PEOPLE ARE HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS, 23 MORE THAN WEDNESDAY'S RECORD. 103 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 53 ARE ON VENTILATORS. THE STATE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF CORONAVIRUS CASES TOPPED 158,087 AS THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,553 NEW INFECTIONS. THREE NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS WERE ALSO REPORTED, BRINGING MAINE'S DEATH TOLL TOELL 1,626.

MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF CORONAVIRUS CASES SURPASSED 158,000 ON THURSDAY AS THE STATE ADDED 1,553 NEW CASES. THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL ALSO REPORTED THREE NEW COVID-RELATED, BRINGING MAINE'S DEATH TOLL TOLL 1,626. THE NUMBER OF MAINERS HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS CONTINUES TO CLIMB. 436 PEOPLE ARE HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS, A NEW RECORD FOR THE STATE. 103 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 53 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

A REFERENDUM TO CHANGE MAINE'S PRIMARY UTILITY COMPANY INTO A QUASI-PUBLIC AGENCY IS POTENTIALLY TABLED UNTIL 2023 BECAUSE ORGANIZERS INDICATED THEY MAY NOT HAVE THE NECESSARY SIGNATURES BEFORE THE DEADLINE TO MAKE THE NOVEMBER BALLOT. THE BANGOR DAILY NEWS REPORTED ON THURSDAY THAT THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC HAS MADE IT DIFFICULT FOR GROUPS TO GARNER SIGNATURES FROM REGISTERED MAINE VOTERS. THEY WOULD NEED TO SUBMIT MORE THAN 63,000 SIGNATURES TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S OFFICE BY JANUARY 31ST. A DELAY COULD SAP MOMENTUM FROM A RECENT VOTE TO HALT CENTRAL MAINE POWER'S PROPOSED \$1 BILLION TRANSMISSION LINE.

413 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE CORONAVIRUS, A NEW RECORD FOR THE STATE. 106 PEOPLE ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 57 ARE ON VENTILATORS. 49 I-C-U BEDS REMAIN STATEWIDE. ON WEDNESDAY, THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,383 CORONAVIRUS CASES. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS NOW STANDS AT 156,532. THE STATE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL REMAINS UNCHANGED AT 1,623 AS NO NEW DEATHS WERE REPORTED.

A RECORD-HIGH 413 PEOPLE ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH COVID-19 IN MAINE, ECLIPSING THE PREVIOUS RECORD OF 403 SET ON MONDAY. ACCORDING TO THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL, 106 PEOPLE ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 57 ARE ON VENTILATORS. 49 I-C-U BEDS REMAIN STATEWIDE. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF CORONAVIRUS CASES ROSE TO 156,532 ON WEDNESDAY AS THE STATE ADDED 1,383 NEW INFECTIONS. NO NEW DEATHS WERE REPORTED. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC 1,623 MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS HAVE DIED.

THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,383 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES ON WEDNESDAY, THE SAME DAY THE STATE SET A NEW HOSPITALIZATION RECORD. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS NOW STANDS AT 156,532. MAINE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL REMAINS UNCHANGED AT 1,623 AS NO NEW DEATHS WERE REPORTED. A RECORD-HIGH 413 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH COVID-19. 106 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 57 ARE ON VENTILATORS. 49 I-C-U BEDS REMAIN STATEWIDE.

THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,786 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES ON TUESDAY AND 20 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES NOW STANDS AT 155,155. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, 1,623 MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS HAVE DIED. 395 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 105 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 60 ARE ON VENTILATORS. 53 CRITICAL CARE BEDS REMAIN STATEWIDE.

20 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS WERE REPORTED IN MAINE ON TUESDAY. THE STATE'S DEATH TOLL NOW STANDS AT 1,623. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF CORONAVIRUS CASES TOPPED 155,155 YESTERDAY AS THE STATE ADDED 1,786 NEW INFECTIONS. 395 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 105 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 60 ARE ON VENTILATORS. 53 CRITICAL CARE BEDS REMAIN STATEWIDE.

395 PEOPLE ARE BEING TREATED FOR COVID-19 IN HOSPITALS ACROSS MAINE, JUST 8 SHY OF THE STATE'S RECORD. OF THOSE HOSPITALIZED, 105 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 60 ARE ON VENTILATORS. ON TUESDAY, MAINE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL TOPPED 1,623 AS THE STATE REPORTED 20 NEW DEATHS. THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL ALSO REPORTED 1,786 NEW CASES. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS NOW STANDS AT 155,155.

FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE PANDEMIC, MORE THAN 400 PEOPLE ARE IN MAINE HOSPITALS WITH COVID-19. ACCORDING TO THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL, 403 PEOPLE WERE HOSPITALIZED AS OF MONDAY, WITH 107 IN THE I-C-U AND 57 ON VENTILATORS. THE INCREASE COMES AS HOSPITALS ARE REPORTING RECORD NUMBERS OF EMPLOYEES OUT OF WORK DUE TO THE VIRUS. MAINEHEALTH AND NORTHERN LIGHT HEALTH, THE STATE'S TWO LARGEST HOSPITAL GROUPS, SAID LAST WEEK THAT HUNDREDS OF WORKERS HAD TO CALL OUT EITHER BECAUSE THEY HAD THE VIRUS OR WERE EXPOSED TO IT.

403 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE CORONAVIRUS, A NEW RECORD FOR THE STATE. 107 PEOPLE ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 57 ARE ON VENTILATORS. AS HOSPITALIZATIONS HAVE INCREASED, SO TOO HAVE THE NUMBER OF VACCINES ADMINISTERED. ACCORDING TO THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL, 2,211 VACCINATIONS WERE DISTRIBUTED SUNDAY. THE NUMBER OF BOOSTER SHOTS GIVEN OUT HAS JUMPED BY MORE THAN 20,500. PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS SAY SHOTS THAT WERE PREVIOUSLY RECORDED AS FINAL DOSES HAD TO BE RECLASSIFIED.

A RECORD-HIGH 403 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH COVID-19 IN MAINE, THE FIRST TIME THAT NUMBER HAS BEEN OVER 400 SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC. 107 PEOPLE ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 57 ARE ON VENTILATORS. THE INCREASE COMES AS HOSPITALS IN MAINE ARE SEEING A RECORD NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES OUT OF WORK DUE TO THE VIRUS. THE STATE'S TWO LARGEST HOSPITAL GROUPS, MAINEHEALTH AND NORTHERN LIGHT HEALTH, SAID LAST WEEK THAT HUNDREDS OF WORKERS WERE OUT, EITHER BECAUSE THEY HAD THE VIRUS OR HAD BEEN EXPOSED TO IT.

MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF CORONAVIRUS CASES SURPASSED 150,000 ON THURSDAY AS THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,307 NEW INFECTIONS. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, THE STATE HAS RECORDED 150,845 CASES. 10 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS WERE REPORTED YESTERDAY, BRINGING MAINE'S DEATH TOLL TO 1,592. 380 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 114 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 55 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

MAINE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL IS CLOSING IN ON 1,600 AS THE STATE RECORDED 10 NEW DEATHS ON THURSDAY. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, 1,592 MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS HAVE DIED. YESTERDAY, THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,307 NEW INFECTIONS, BRINGING THE STATEWIDE TOTAL TO 150,845. 380 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 114 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 55 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

380 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE CORONAVIRUS, JUST TWO SHY OF THE STATE'S RECORD. 114 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 55 ARE ON VENTILATORS. THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,307 NEW CASES ON THURSDAY AND 10 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS NOW STANDS AT 150,845. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, 1,592 MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS HAVE DIED.

LAWMAKERS HAVE OFFICIALLY RECEIVED A REPORT FROM AN OVERSIGHT BODY FOR THE MAINE OFFICE OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES THAT INCLUDES SUMMARIES OF THE "SUBSTANTIAL ISSUES" THAT THE OFFICE FOUND IN HALF THE CASES IT INVESTIGATED IN 2021. THE PORTLAND PRESS HERALD REPORTS MAINE CHILD WELFARE OMBUDSMAN CHRISTINE ALBERI'S OFFICE OPENED 84 CASES IN RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS. IN NOVEMBER, SHE BRIEFED LAWMAKERS ON MANY OF THE REPORT'S FINDINGS. THE CHILD WELFARE OFFICE HAS BEEN UNDER SCRUTINY FOR YEARS. THAT WAS RENEWED WHEN FIVE CHILDREN DIED OVER THE COURSE OF A MONTH LAST SUMMER.

THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,326 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES ON WEDNESDAY AND 26 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES NOW STANDS AT 149,543. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, 1,582 MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS HAVE DIED. 382 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS, JUST 5 SHY OF THE STATE'S RECORD. 117 PEOPLE ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 59 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

26 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS WERE REPORTED IN MAINE ON TUESDAY. THE STATE'S DEATH TOLL NOW STANDS AT 1,582. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF CORONAVIRUS CASES TOPPED 149,543 YESTERDAY AS THE STATE ADDED 1,326 NEW INFECTIONS. 382 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS, JUST 5 SHY OF THE STATE'S RECORD. 117 PEOPLE ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 59 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

382 PEOPLE ARE BEING TREATED FOR COVID-19 IN HOSPITALS ACROSS THE STATE, SLIGHTLY BELOW THE RECORD OF 387, SET ON DECEMBER 21ST. OF THOSE HOSPITALIZED, 117 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 59 ARE ON VENTILATORS. MAINE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL TOPPED 1,582 ON WEDNESDAY AS THE STATE REPORTED 26 NEW DEATHS. THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL ALSO REPORTED 1,326 NEW CASES. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS NOW STANDS AT 149,543.

THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL REPORTED 1,477 NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES ON TUESDAY AND 25 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF CASES NOW STANDS AT 148,217. SINCE THE START OF THE PANDEMIC, 1,556 MAINERS TO TEST POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS HAVE DIED. 373 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 114 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 55 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

25 NEW COVID-RELATED DEATHS WERE REPORTED IN MAINE ON TUESDAY. ANDROSCOGGIN COUNTY REPORTED FIVE NEW DEATHS, WHILE PENOBSCOT COUNTY HAD FOUR NEW DEATHS. AROOSTOOK, PISCATAQUIS AND WALDO COUNTIES EACH REPORTED THREE DEATHS. OXFORD AND LINCOLN COUNTIES EACH REPORTED TWO DEATHS. HANCOCK, KENNEBEC, AND WASHINGTON COUNTIES REPORTED ONE NEW DEATH EACH. THE STATE'S DEATH TOLL NOW STANDS AT 1,556. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF CORONAVIRUS CASES TOPPED 148,217 YESTERDAY AS THE STATE ADDED 1,477 NEW INFECTIONS. 373 MAINERS ARE CURRENTLY HOSPITALIZED WITH THE VIRUS. 114 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 55 ARE ON VENTILATORS.

373 PEOPLE ARE BEING TREATED FOR COVID-19 IN HOSPITALS ACROSS MAINE, JUST 14 SHY OF THE STATE'S RECORD. OF THOSE HOSPITALIZED, 114 ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 55 ARE ON VENTILATORS. ON TUESDAY, MAINE'S COVID-RELATED DEATH TOLL TOPPED 1,556 AS THE STATE REPORTED 25 NEW DEATHS. THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL ALSO REPORTED 1,477 NEW CASES. MAINE'S TOTAL NUMBER OF INFECTIONS NOW STANDS AT 148,217.

THE NUMBER OF MAINERS HOSPITALIZED WITH THE CORONAVIRUS IS UP SLIGHTLY. ACCORDING TO THE MAINE CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL, AS OF SUNDAY, 340 PEOPLE ARE BEING TREATED FOR THE VIRUS IN HOSPITALS ACROSS THE STATE. 119 MAINERS ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 57 ARE ON VENTILATORS. 57 I-C-U BEDS ARE AVAILABLE STATEWIDE. OFFICIALS SAY MORE THAN 1,400 NEW CORONAVIRUS VACCINATIONS WERE ADMINISTERED ON NEW YEAR'S DAY. OF THOSE, 974 WERE BOOSTER SHOTS.

THOUSANDS OF CORONAVIRUS VACCINES ARE CONTINUING TO BE ADMINISTERED AS MAINE CONTENDS WITH A LARGE NUMBER OF HOSPITALIZATIONS. PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS SAY MORE THAN 1,400 NEW VACCINATIONS WERE ADMINISTERED SATURDAY. OF THOSE, 974 WERE BOOSTER SHOTS. AS OF SUNDAY, 340 PEOPLE ARE BEING TREATED FOR THE VIRUS IN HOSPITALS ACROSS THE STATE. 119 MAINERS ARE IN CRITICAL CARE. 57 ARE ON VENTILATORS. 57 I-C-U BEDS ARE AVAILABLE STATEWIDE.