

Quarterly Issues List for WZLO
July 1st through September 30th, 2023

The following report identifies this quarter's issues as:

- POWER UTILITY ISSUES
 - Issues concerning Central Maine Power, Versant Power, and the Public Utilities Commission continue to be top-of-mind for our listening audience. Some of the stories have included CMP continuing work on their transmission line project, a referendum to create a state public utility, and changes to customers' monthly power bills.
- ARPA FUNDING
 - Counties and Municipalities across the country have been distributing federal funding via the American Rescue Plan Act. Here in Maine we've kept listeners informed about the programs and organizations these pandemic-related funds are being used for.
- HOUSING
 - Maine's housing market continues to skyrocket. Officials say the current market is being driven by high demand, caused in part by a lack of inventory. We've continued to report on this trend that's not expected to end anytime soon.
- LEGISLATURE WRAP
 - During the first part of this quarter, we covered the end of the most recent legislative session, including bills passed, vetoes sustained, and other business happening at the state house in Augusta.
- TRIBAL ISSUES
 - From a tribal sovereignty bill that failed to pass at the end of the legislative session, to Maine's sports betting rules, and money being earmarked to curb opioid-related deaths in tribal communities, tribal issues has been a hot topic during the last quarter.

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.

THE BANGOR CITY COUNCIL IS PROPOSING NEW REGULATIONS FOR AIR-B-N-B AND OTHER SHORT-TERM RENTAL PROPERTIES. COUNCILORS MET ON MONDAY TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE. COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR ANNE KRIEG SAYS BANGOR IS WORKING TO CREATE A HAPPY MEDIUM, CONSIDERING THE CITY AND STATE'S STRESSED HOUSING MARKET. ACCORDING TO W-L-B-Z, IF THE CURRENT PROPOSAL IS APPROVED, THE CITY WILL ONLY ISSUE 153 AIRBNB AND SHORT-TERM RENTAL PERMITS COMBINED PER YEAR. PROPOSED REGULATIONS ALSO STATE THAT A HOST CAN ONLY HOLD FIVE PERMITS AT A TIME. KRIEG SAID THE CAP WAS PUT IN PLACE TO KEEP INVESTORS FROM BUYING UP MULTIPLE LIVING SPACES. A CAP WAS ALSO PLACED ON APARTMENT BUILDINGS. LANDLORDS WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO RENT MORE THAN 50 PERCENT OF THEIR UNITS FOR SHORT-TERM RENTAL. THE PROPERTIES MUST ALSO PASS INSPECTION BEFORE A SHORT-TERM RENTAL PERMIT IS APPROVED. THE CITY COUNCIL WILL VOTE ON THE PROPOSED ORDINANCE IN OCTOBER.

MILLS ON Q3

9/21

PA

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS HAS FORMALLY ANNOUNCED HER OPPOSITION TO QUESTION 3, WHICH WILL APPEAR ON THIS NOVEMBER'S BALLOT. THE REFERENDUM PROPOSES CREATING A CONSUMER-OWNED UTILITY THROUGH A FORCED BUYOUT OF CENTRAL MAINE POWER AND VERSANT, WHICH PROVIDE 97% OF THE STATE'S ELECTRICITY. IN HER WEEKLY RADIO ADDRESS MILLS LIKENED THE CREATION OF THE NEW UTILITY TO A "HOSTILE TAKEOVER".

MILLS 2001

:21

...DOWN THE ROAD.

THE GOVERNOR'S POSITION ISN'T A SURPRISE, AS SHE VETOED LEGISLATION TWO YEARS AGO THAT WAS SIMILAR TO THE PLAN BEING PROPOSED IN QUESTION 3. SUPPORTERS OF THE CREATION OF PINE TREE POWER SAY THE NEW UTILITY WOULD SAVE THE STATE \$9 BILLION OVER 30 YEARS. THAT COMES OUT TO ROUGHLY \$367 IN SAVINGS A YEAR FOR THE AVERAGE RATEPAYER.

EMERGENCY OVER

9/18

PA

UPDATE

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS HAS SUSPENDED THE STATE OF EMERGENCY SHE DECLARED LAST WEEK IN PREPARATION FOR HURRICANE LEE. THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE SUNDAY MORNING. MEMA AND OTHER STATE AGENCIES ARE CONTINUING TO SUPPORT LOCAL OFFICIALS WITH CLEAN-UP AND RECOVERY EFFORTS, WHILE CENTRAL MAINE POWER AND VERSANT CONTINUE TO CLEAN UP FALLEN TREES AND LIMBS, AND RESTORE POWER TO CUSTOMERS. THE STATE OF MAINE WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE ACCESS TO FEDERAL RESOURCES FOR RECOVERY, AS NEEDED, UNDER PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN'S EMERGENCY DISASTER DECLARATION.

MAINE'S POPULATION GREW AT MORE THAN TWICE THE NATIONAL RATE LAST YEAR, FOLLOWING DECADES OF LAGGING GROWTH. ON THURSDAY, THE U.S. CENSUS BUREAU RELEASED STATE-LEVEL DATA FROM THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY, WHICH IS MEANT TO PROVIDE ANNUAL DEMOGRAPHIC UPDATES. ACCORDING TO THE KENNEBEC JOURNAL, MAINE'S GROWTH WAS FUELED IN PART BY PEOPLE LEAVING MORE POPULATED STATES DURING THE PANDEMIC. AT THE SAME TIME, THE STATE CONTINUED TO AGE MORE RAPIDLY THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE, CONTINUING A TREND THAT HAS BROAD IMPLICATIONS FOR THE WORKFORCE, HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS, THE HOUSING MARKET AND MORE.

HURRICANE LEE

9/15

PA

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS AND THE MAINE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY HAVE ISSUED A STATEMENT ON PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE AHEAD OF HURRICANE LEE. MEMA RECOMMENDS CHECKING YOUR EMERGENCY KITS, AND ENSURING YOU HAVE SUPPLIES FOR SEVERAL DAYS WITHOUT POWER, INCLUDING FOOD, WATER, AND HAND SANITIZER. THEY SAY YOU SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER MEDICATIONS, PET FOOD, AND OTHER NEEDS. YOU CAN ALSO DOWNLOAD THE FEMA OR NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE APPS TO STAY UP TO DATE WITH THE LATEST ALERTS. IT'S ALSO A GOOD IDEA TO CHARGE YOUR ELECTRONIC DEVICES AND DETERMINE LOCAL EVACUATION ROUTES, AND IF YOU HAVE A GENERATOR TO MAKE SURE IT'S PROPERLY FUELED AND WORKING AHEAD OF THE STORM.

MAINE'S MAJOR POWER PROVIDERS SAY THEY'RE DOING AS MUCH WORK, IN ADVANCE, AS THEY CAN TO ENSURE THE LIGHTS STAY ON THROUGH THE WEEKEND. OFFICIALS FROM BOTH VERSANT POWER AND CENTRAL MAINE POWER TELL TV5 THEY HAVE THEIR FULL ARSENAL OF CREWS READY TO RESPOND TO OUTAGES AND HAVE OUT-OF-STATE HELP AT THE READY SHOULD THE NEED ARISE. BOTH COMPANIES ASK THAT IF YOU HAVE AN OUTAGE, TO NOT APPROACH CREWS AS THEY'RE WORKING IN THE FIELD AND TO INSTEAD REPORT IT WITH A CALL OR ON THEIR APP.

AS HURRICANE LEE CONTINUES ITS PATH TOWARD MAINE, GOVERNOR JANET MILLS HAS DECLARED A STATE OF EMERGENCY. MILLS HAS ALSO REQUESTED PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN ISSUE A PREEMPTIVE PRESIDENTIAL EMERGENCY DISASTER DECLARATION FOR THE STATE. WITH THE PROCLAMATION, THE MAINE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY WILL BE ABLE TO ACTIVATE AND DEPLOY RESOURCES NECESSARY TO RESPOND TO THE STORM. SUCH A DECLARATION LETS MAINE ACCESS FEDERAL RESOURCES AND PERSONNEL TO OFFER AID PREEMPTIVELY.

LEE

9/14

PA

THE MAINE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY IS URGING COMMUNITIES IN CENTRAL MAINE TO PREPARE FOR FLASH FLOODS AND POWER OUTAGES AS HURRICANE LEE IS EXPECTED TO SLAM INTO THE STATE. THE KENNEBEC JOURNAL REPORTS THAT WHILE PROJECTIONS SHOW THE BIGGEST EFFECTS WILL LIKELY BE ALONG THE STATE'S COASTLINE, THE NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE SAYS FLASH FLOODING AND THE FLOODING OF SMALL STREAMS ARE THE MOST LIKELY IMPACTS FOR CENTRAL MAINE. OFFICIALS ARE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE AMOUNT OF RAIN THAT CENTRAL MAINE HAS RECEIVED THIS YEAR AND THE POSSIBILITY THAT TREES COULD BE UPROOTED, BRINGING POWER OUTAGES ACROSS THE REGION. HURRICANE LEE COULD BE EITHER A CATEGORY 1 HURRICANE OR A TROPICAL STORM BY THE TIME IT REACHES MAINE. IT'S EXPECTED TO REACH CENTRAL MAINE BY ABOUT MIDNIGHT FRIDAY AND CONTINUE INTO SATURDAY.

CENTRAL MAINE POWER IS CITING CONCERNS OVER TREE HEALTH AND THE STATE'S POWER GRID WHILE MONITORING THE PATH OF HURRICANE LEE. THE STORM IS EXPECTED TO START IMPACTING THE STATE AS EARLY AS FRIDAY. THE COMPANY NOTES THAT MAINE'S 'EXTRAORDINARILY WET SUMMER' COULD CAUSE TREE STRESS, AS SATURATED SOIL, FLOODING AND NUTRIENT RUNOFF LEADS TO WEAKENED, OR ROTTEN ROOTS. C-M-P SAYS THE IMPACTS ON MAINE'S POWER GRID COULD BE WORSENERD DUE TO TREE STRESS, HIGH WINDS, AND THE TRACK OF THE HURRICANE.

SENATOR ANGUS KING IS INTRODUCING A NEW BILL TO HELP TEACHERS WITH OUT-OF-POCKET EXPENSES. RIGHT NOW, THE CURRENT DEDUCTION FOR TEACHERS IS JUST \$300. HOWEVER KING'S BILL WOULD INCREASE THAT TO \$1-THOUSAND AND INDEX IT TO INFLATION GOING FORWARD. ACCORDING TO TV5, SUPPLIES FROM NOTEBOOKS TO PENCILS TO PAPER PRODUCTS WOULD BE COVERED.

THE FIREFIGHTERS AT BANGOR'S CENTRAL STATION MARKED THE 22ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE SEPTEMBER 11TH ATTACKS WITH A WORK COAT DRAPED UNDER A FLAG AND A DEMAND: THAT THE CITY THEY WORK FOR TREAT THEM WITH MORE RESPECT. OFFICIALS ESTIMATE THE BANGOR FIRE DEPARTMENT IS 12 FIREFIGHTERS SHORT OF BEING FULLY STAFFED, WHICH HAS FORCED MANY ON-STAFF TO WORK OVERTIME, SOMETIMES TWICE THE NORMAL 48-HOUR WEEKLY SCHEDULE. ACCORDING TO W-L-B-Z, THE ROOT OF THE STAFFING PROBLEM IS BELIEVED TO BE A LACK OF COMPETITIVE PAY, AN ISSUE THE UNION RAISED BEFORE THE BANGOR CITY COUNCIL WEEKS AGO, ADVOCATING FOR AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDS TO GO TOWARDS INCREASED SALARIES. THE COUNCIL VOTED AGAINST THE EFFORT.

THE MAINE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC ADVOCATE IS ACCUSING CENTRAL MAINE POWER OF OVERSPENDING ON ITS STORM RESPONSE LAST YEAR. THE COMPANY HAD BUDGETED \$10-MILLION IN 2022 FOR STORM COSTS BUT SPENT ROUGHLY \$127-MILLION, AND IS NOW RECOVERING THE DIFFERENCE FROM RATEPAYERS THROUGH A RATE INCREASE THAT WAS APPROVED BY THE MAINE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION. W-M-T-W HAS OBTAINED TESTIMONY FILED WITH THE P-U-C BY THE PUBLIC ADVOCATE THAT SAYS, "CMP IMPRUDENTLY INCURRED EXCESSIVE STORM COSTS" AND "FAILED TO FOLLOW THE GUIDELINES SET FORTH IN THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN." THE OFFICE ARGUES THAT C-M-P SHOULDN'T BE ALLOWED TO RECOVER ALL OF THE MONEY IT'S REQUESTED. CENTRAL MAINE POWER IS CALLING THE ACCUSATIONS "OUTRAGEOUS AND IRRESPONSIBLE." THE P-U-C WILL NOW REVIEW THE PUBLIC ADVOCATE'S CLAIMS.

SENATOR ANGUS KING HAS INTRODUCED A BILL TO EXPAND CLEAN WATER ACCESS IN TRIBAL COMMUNITIES ACROSS MAINE AND THE NATION. HIS OFFICE SAYS THE TRIBAL ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER ACT WOULD INVEST OVER ONE BILLION DOLLARS IN TRIBAL WATER INFRASTRUCTURE. ACCORDING TO TV5, THERE ARE CURRENTLY FIVE PUBLIC WATER SYSTEMS IN MAINE, WITH *SOME* STRUGGLING TO ADDRESS WATER QUALITY. THE BILL WOULD HELP TRIBAL SANITATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES AND GO TO VARIOUS PROJECTS. KING SAYS NEARLY HALF OF NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSEHOLDS DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO RELIABLE WATER SOURCES AND CLEAN DRINKING WATER WITH HOMES BEING 19 TIMES MORE LIKELY THAN OTHER HOUSEHOLDS TO LACK INDOOR PLUMBING.

HOME SALES

8/24

PA

DEMAND FOR HOMES IN MAINE REMAINS HIGH, BUT SO DO PRICES, WHICH IS REPORTEDLY SLOWING SALES. THE MAINE ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS SAYS THE MEDIAN SALES PRICE OF A HOME IN MAINE LAST MONTH WAS \$380,000. THAT'S UP MORE THAN 7% FROM JULY OF LAST YEAR. SALES ON JULY 3 DECREASED ALMOST 21% COMPARED TO A YEAR AGO. OFFICIALS TELL TV5 THERE ARE STILL PLENTY OF BUYERS OUT THERE, BUT THE ISSUE IS INVENTORY. NATIONALLY SALES DIPPED MORE THAN 16% LAST MONTH.

PENOBSCOT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AWARDED A NUMBER OF GRANTS ON TUESDAY FUNDED BY THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT. DURING THEIR MEETING YESTERDAY MORNING, COMMISSIONERS AWARDED FUNDS TO 'FRIENDS OF DAKIN POOL', DESIGN WALL HOUSING, THE TOWN OF NEWBURGH, THE MILLINOCKET HISTORICAL SOCIETY, AND THE NORTHERN FOREST CENTER. ACCORDING TO TV5, THE FUNDING WILL ASSIST WITH VARIOUS PROJECTS, INCLUDING RESURFACING THE DAKIN POOL DECKING, REFURBISHING THE OLD NEWBURGH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND, AND ADDING ACCESS TO THE SECOND STORY OF THE MILLINOCKET HISTORICAL SOCIETY. THE FULL PRESENTATION IS AVAILABLE ON THE PENOBSCOT COUNTY FACEBOOK PAGE.

MORE POWERLINES

8/22

PA

A PORTION OF ROUTE 302 IN NAPLES WAS CLOSED DOWN AFTER A CAR ENDED UP SUSPENDED IN POWER LINES MONDAY NIGHT. ACCORDING TO W-M-T-W, THE DRIVER AND HIS DOG BOTH WALKED AWAY FROM THE CRASH, BUT IT'S UNCLEAR HOW THE CAR GOT INTO THE POWER LINES IN THE FIRST PLACE. ROUTE 302, BETWEEN HARRISON ROAD AND CASCO ROAD, WAS SHUT DOWN AS CREWS REMOVED THE VEHICLE. OVER 1,100 CMP CUSTOMERS WERE LEFT IN THE DARK.

POWERLINES

8/22

PA

A TRACTOR TRAILER BROUGHT DOWN SOME POWER LINES IN SKOWHEGAN EARLY MONDAY MORNING. IT HAPPENED AROUND 3:30AM ON WALNUT STREET. OFFICIALS SAY THE TRUCK CAME INTO CONTACT WITH A LOW-HANGING WIRE AND PULLED DOWN NEARBY UTILITY POLES. POLICE SAY ONE OF THOSE POLES HAD BEEN DAMAGED IN A CRASH MORE THAN A WEEK EARLIER. THE TRUCK DRIVER, 48-YEAR-OLD JONATHAN FROST OF CANAAN, WAS NOT INJURED, AND REMAINED INSIDE THE CAB UNTIL IT WAS SAFE FOR HIM TO EXIT. THE INCIDENT KNOCKED OUT POWER TO OVER A THOUSAND C-M-P CUSTOMERS.

THE PENOBSCOT NATION HELD A GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY ON THURSDAY FOR A NEW COMMUNITY CENTER. THE EVENT WAS ATTENDED BY OFFICIALS FROM ACROSS THE STATE. SEVERAL SPEAKERS FROM THE PENOBSCOT NATION AS WELL AS OTHER PARTNERS ON THE PROJECT SPOKE ABOUT THE NEED FOR THE CENTER, WHICH WILL SERVE AS A HOME TO GOVERNANCE AND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS. THE CHIEF OF THE PENOBSCOT NATION SAYS THE FACILITY WILL ALSO HIGHLIGHT THEIR CULTURE AND PROVIDE A PLACE FOR THEIR TRIBAL COURT SYSTEM, ADMINISTRATION, AND TRIBAL LEADERSHIP. DOORS ARE EXPECTED TO OPEN IN FALL 2024.

GROUPS OPPOSED TO MAINE'S NEW LAW EXPANDING ACCESS TO ABORTIONS WON'T ATTEMPT TO NULLIFY THE NEW STATUTE THROUGH A REFERENDUM. REPUBLICAN REPRESENTATIVE LAUREL LIBBY, LEADER OF THE GROUP "SPEAK UP FOR LIFE", SAID WEDNESDAY THAT ALLIES DECIDED TO FOCUS THEIR RESOURCES ON ELECTING CANDIDATES WHO ARE OPPOSED TO ABORTIONS INSTEAD OF COLLECTING SIGNATURES AND RUNNING A SO-CALLED PEOPLE'S VETO CAMPAIGN. THE BILL SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR JANET MILLS LAST MONTH ALLOWS ABORTIONS AT ANY TIME IF DEEMED MEDICALLY NECESSARY BY A DOCTOR, MAKING THE LAW ONE OF THE NATION'S LEAST RESTRICTIVE.

UPDATE

BANGOR CITY COUNCILORS CONTINUED WORKING THROUGH ARPA FUNDING REQUESTS AT A WORKSHOP MONDAY NIGHT. TV5 REPORTS THE MEETING BEGAN WITH UPDATES ON PREVIOUSLY DISCUSSED ITEMS. AMONG THEM: A \$500,000 REQUEST FROM THE BANGOR SCHOOL DEPARTMENT. OFFICIALS SAY THE MONEY WOULD FUND THE CREATION OF HEALTH CLINIC SPACES IN THE CITY'S TWO MIDDLE SCHOOLS. COUNCILORS UNANIMOUSLY SUPPORTED FULLY FUNDING THAT REQUEST, WITH THE CAVEAT THAT A DENTAL HEALTH COMPONENT AT THE CLINICS WILL BE EXPLORED. COUNCILORS ALSO MOVED FORWARD WITH A \$70-THOUSAND REQUEST FROM THE MAINE MULTICULTURAL CENTER, AND \$1-MILLION FOR HABITAT FOR HUMANITY OF GREATER BANGOR. EVERYTHING STILL HAS TO BE APPROVED AT A FULL CITY COUNCIL MEETING LATER THIS MONTH.

SENATOR BERNIE SANDERS OF VERMONT IS ENDORSING MAINE'S PINE TREE POWER CAMPAIGN. MAINE VOTERS WILL DECIDE THIS NOVEMBER WHETHER THE STATE SHOULD BUY OUT C-M-P AND VERSANT IN ORDER TO PRODUCE A PUBLICLY-OWNED UTILITY WHICH WILL BE OPERATED LOCALLY. SANDERS SAID "POWER BELONGS IN THE HANDS OF THE PEOPLE, NOT GREEDY CORPORATIONS." SANDERS ANNOUNCED HIS SUPPORT OF THE CAMPAIGN AFTER LEARNING THAT AVANGRID, THE FOREIGN COMPANY THAT OWNS CENTRAL MAINE POWER, BROUGHT IN OVER TWO BILLION DOLLARS IN PROFIT DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THIS YEAR.

WIND

7/28

PA

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS HAS SIGNED INTO LAW A BILL TO PROCURE 3,000 MEGAWATTS OF ELECTRICITY FROM OFFSHORE WIND TURBINES BY 2040, ENOUGH TO POWER ROUGHLY HALF OF THE STATE'S ELECTRICITY LOAD. MILLS SAID THURSDAY THAT RESPONSIBLE OFFSHORE WIND PROMISES "ABUNDANT CLEAN ENERGY, STABLE ENERGY PRICES, GOOD-PAYING JOBS AND A HEALTHIER ENVIRONMENT." THE LAW SETS A TIMELINE FOR REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS AND STANDARDS FOR PORT DEVELOPMENT FOR CONSTRUCTION JOBS. IT PUTS MAINE ON A PATH TO CATCH UP WITH OTHER STATES THAT ALREADY HAVE OFFSHORE WIND PROJECTS. THE LAW ALSO INCLUDES INCENTIVES AIMED AT ENSURING WIND POWER DEVELOPERS STEER CLEAR OF LOBSTER FISHING GROUNDS.

THE PARENT COMPANY OF CENTRAL MAINE POWER SAYS CONSTRUCTION IS RESUMING ON THE NEW ENGLAND CLEAN ENERGY CONNECT, DESPITE A BIG COST INCREASE. THE TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT WILL SERVE AS A CONDUIT FOR CANADIAN HYDROPOWER TO REACH THE NEW ENGLAND POWER GRID. AVANGRID SAYS THE COST OF THE PROJECT, ORIGINALLY ESTIMATED AT \$1 BILLION, HAS GROWN TO \$1.5 BILLION AS LITIGATION DELAYED CONSTRUCTION AND INFLATION CAUSED PRICES TO CREEP UPWARD. THE COMPANY SAYS THE PROJECT IS MOVING FORWARD WITH CONSTRUCTION RESUMING AT A SUBSTATION IN LEWISTON STARTING IN A WEEK. MAINE RESTORED PERMITS FOR THE PROJECT IN MAY BUT WORK DID NOT IMMEDIATELY RESUME BECAUSE OF CONCERNS ABOUT NEW COSTS.

A BILL TO END THE SALE OF FLAVORED TOBACCO IN MAINE WILL NOT BE ADDRESSED AGAIN UNTIL NEXT YEAR. THE LEGISLATURE TABLED THE BILL ON TUESDAY, WHICH MEANS THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES LIKELY WON'T DISCUSS THE BILL UNTIL 2024. THE BILL WAS APPROVED BY THE SENATE BACK IN JUNE. A FEW TOWNS ACROSS MAINE, INCLUDING BANGOR AND BAR HARBOR, HAVE ALREADY BANNED THE SALE OF FLAVORED TOBACCO.

MAINE LAWMAKERS HAVE VOTED TO GIVE THEMSELVES A RAISE. ACCORDING TO TV5, LAWMAKERS GAVE FINAL APPROVAL TO A BOOST IN THEIR ANNUAL STIPENDS FROM \$20,000 TO \$25,000 IN YEAR ONE, USUALLY A SIX-MONTH SESSION, AND FROM \$15,000 TO \$20,000 IN YEAR TWO, USUALLY A FOUR-MONTH SESSION. THE TOTAL COST WILL BE \$1.7-MILLION AND WILL KICK IN NEXT YEAR. THE BILL NOW GOES TO GOVERNOR MILLS FOR HER APPROVAL. MILLS AND THE LEGISLATURE HAVE ALSO APPROVED AN INCREASE TO THE NEXT GOVERNOR'S SALARY FROM A NATIONWIDE LOW OF \$70,000 TO \$125,000 A YEAR.

MAINE VOTERS WILL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL NEXT YEAR TO VOTE ON A PROPOSAL TO REPLACE THE CURRENT STATE FLAG WITH A DESIGN BASED ON MAINE'S ORIGINAL FLAG FROM 1901. THE NEW, OLD FLAG FEATURES A PINE TREE ON A BEIGE FIELD WITH A BLUE STAR.

LAWMAKERS WRAPPED UP THE SESSION EARLY WEDNESDAY MORNING, CASTING FINAL VOTES ON A SLEW OF BILLS TO SEND TO THE GOVERNOR'S DESK. ACCORDING TO THE KENNEBEC JOURNAL, GOVERNOR MILLS SAYS SHE'LL ALLOW THE BILL TO BECOME LAW, A MOVE THAT WILL EFFECTIVELY DELAY THE REFERENDUM FOR A YEAR BECAUSE OF A QUIRK IN MAINE'S CONSTITUTION.

VETOES SUSTAINED

7/26

PA

TWO VETOES FROM GOVERNOR MILLS WERE SUSTAINED BY LAWMAKERS IN AUGUSTA ON TUESDAY. ONE OF THE BILLS WOULD'VE PAID MAINE FARM WORKERS MINIMUM WAGE. IN THE GOVERNOR'S VETO MESSAGE, SHE SAID SHE SUPPORTS THE CONCEPT BUT HAD QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BILL'S LANGUAGE. ACCORDING TO TV5, THE GOVERNOR SAYS SHE'LL PRESENT HER OWN BILL NEXT YEAR BASED ON THE CONCLUSIONS OF A STAKEHOLDER GROUP THAT SHE PLANS TO ESTABLISH. LAWMAKERS ALSO SUSTAINED THE GOVERNOR'S VETO ON A BILL THAT WOULD BAN FOREIGN GOVERNMENT-OWNED ENTITIES FROM SPENDING MONEY ON MAINE'S BALLOT CAMPAIGNS. MAINE VOTERS WILL HAVE THE FINAL SAY ON THAT BILL THIS NOVEMBER.

UPDATE

MAINE VOTERS WILL LIKELY BE THE ONES TO DECIDE WHETHER TO RESTORE LONG REMOVED LANGUAGE ABOUT THE STATE'S OBLIGATIONS TO NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES TO PRINTED VERSIONS OF ITS CONSTITUTION. THE MAINE LEGISLATURE IS POISED TO GIVE ITS FINAL APPROVAL TODAY TO A PROPOSAL TO RESTORE THE LANGUAGE THAT REQUIRES MAINE TO HONOR TREATIES THE STATE INHERITED FROM MASSACHUSETTS WHEN IT BECAME ITS OWN STATE MORE THAN TWO CENTURIES AGO. THE LANGUAGE HAS ALWAYS APPLIED, BUT WAS REMOVED FROM PRINTED VERSIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION IN THE 19TH CENTURY. STATEWIDE VOTERS MUST ALSO APPROVE OF THE CHANGE TO THE CONSTITUTION.

MAINE IS POISED TO LAUNCH AN OFFSHORE WIND PROGRAM IN THE GULF OF MAINE THAT WOULD MEET CLEAN ENERGY GOALS AND PRODUCE ENOUGH POWER FOR ABOUT 900,000 HOMES. THE GOAL CALLS FOR REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS TO BE ISSUED FOR 3,000 MEGAWATTS OF ELECTRICITY FROM OFFSHORE, FLOATING WIND TURBINES BY 2040. THAT'S ENOUGH POWER TO CARRY ABOUT HALF OF MAINE'S ELECTRICITY LOAD. THE BILL WAS REVISED AFTER A VETO BY GOVERNOR JANET MILLS TO ENSURE NON-UNION COMPANIES COULD GET INTO THE BUSINESS OF PRODUCING THE TURBINES.

FOLLOWING A CONTROVERSIAL VOTE THAT DENIED AN ARPA FUNDING REQUEST FROM BANGOR FIREFIGHTERS, CITY COUNCILORS SAY THEY'RE LOOKING FOR A DIFFERENT WAY FORWARD. THE CITY OF BANGOR WAS AWARDED ROUGHLY \$20 MILLION FROM THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT THAT IT'S LOOKING TO SPLIT AMONG QUALIFYING ORGANIZATIONS. THE REQUEST FROM THE BANGOR FIREFIGHTERS' UNION WAS ONE OF 60 APPLICATIONS. ACCORDING TO TV5, THE FIREFIGHTERS WERE ASKING FOR MORE THAN \$817,000 TO INCREASE PAY FOR ESSENTIAL WORKERS. FOLLOWING THE 5-4 VOTE, COUNCILORS SAID THE CONVERSATION IS NOT OVER, AND THEY WANT TO FIND AVENUES OUTSIDE OF ARPA FUNDING TO ADDRESS FIREFIGHTERS' CONCERNS.

MAINE VETERANS WHO WERE EXPOSED TO TOXIC HAZARDS MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFITS, BUT THERE'S A FILING DEADLINE JUST AROUND THE CORNER. ACCORDING TO TV5, WEDNESDAY AUGUST 9TH IS THE LAST DAY FOR VETERANS TO APPLY FOR BACKDATED TOXIC EXPOSURE BENEFITS. THE BENEFITS COME FROM THE PACT ACT OF 2022, A BIPARTISAN BILL BACKED BY SENATOR ANGUS KING. KING HELD A PRESS CONFERENCE THURSDAY HOPING TO GET THE WORD OUT TO THE 56,000 MAINE VETERANS WHO POTENTIALLY QUALIFY. HE SAYS FEWER THAN 3,000 HAVE SUBMITTED A CLAIM SO FAR. FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO GET STARTED ON A CLAIM, CALL 621-6938 OR VISIT "V-A (DOT) GOV".

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS HAS VETOED A BILL TO PROHIBIT FOREIGN INFLUENCE IN MAINE ELECTIONS, BUT VOTERS WILL GET THE GET THE FINAL SAY IF LAWMAKERS SUSTAIN THE VETO NEXT WEEK. MILLS SAID IN A STATEMENT WEDNESDAY THAT SHE HAD CONCERNS ABOUT THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF THE BILL AND FEARED THE LANGUAGE WAS SO BROAD IT COULD SILENCE “LEGITIMATE VOICES, INCLUDING MAINE-BASED BUSINESSES.” THE BILL WAS INTRODUCED AFTER THE COMPANY HYDRO-QUEBEC SPENT MILLIONS FIGHTING A REFERENDUM IN WHICH VOTERS REBUKED A TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT AIMED AT BRINGING CANADIAN HYDROPOWER TO THE NEW ENGLAND POWER GRID. STATE LAW BANS FOREIGN NATIONALS AND COMPANIES FROM DONATING TO CANDIDATE CAMPAIGNS BUT DOESN’T ADDRESS REFERENDUMS.

PROSTITUTION

7/20

PA

MAINE WILL SOON BECOME THE FIRST STATE TO DECRIMINALIZE PROSTITUTION, BUT ONLY FOR ADULTS WHO SELL SEXUAL SERVICES, NOT FOR BUYERS. GOVERNOR JANET MILLS HAS SIGNED THE BILL INTO LAW, AND IT SHOULD TAKE EFFECT IN OCTOBER, 90 DAYS AFTER THE STATE LEGISLATURE ADJOURNS FOR THE YEAR. BUT GROUPS LIKE 'DECRIMINALIZE SEX WORK' WANT ADULT CONSENSUAL SEX BUYERS TO BE DECRIMINALIZED TOO, ARGUING THAT WOULD REDUCE EXPLOITATION AND VIOLENCE WHILE IMPROVING SEX WORKER HEALTH AND SAFETY. A SECOND PROSTITUTION BILL, ALSO SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR, WILL SEAL CRIMINAL RECORDS OF CONVICTIONS FOR SELLING SEX.

SENATORS SUSAN COLLINS AND ANGUS KING HAVE ANNOUNCED FEDERAL FUNDING TO TREAT SUBSTANCE ABUSE CONDITIONS FOR TRIBAL COMMUNITIES. WABANAKI PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLNESS WILL RECEIVE \$750,000 TO EXPAND SUBSTANCE-USE DISORDER AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES. TV5 REPORTS THE MONEY WILL SUPPORT A MEDICATION ASSISTED TREATMENT PROGRAM WHICH, IN COMBINATION WITH THERAPY, PROVIDES A WHOLE-PATIENT APPROACH TO THE TREATMENT OF OPIOID ADDICTION. ACCORDING TO THE ATTORNEY GENERALS OFFICE, THERE WERE MORE THAN 700 DEATHS FROM DRUG OVERDOSES IN MAINE LAST YEAR.

MAINE WILL SOON EXPAND ABORTION ACCESS, JOINING A HALF DOZEN STATES THAT LEAVE IT TO DOCTORS AND PATIENTS TO MAKE THE DECISION WITHOUT RESTRICTIONS ON TIMING. GOVERNOR JANET MILLS SIGNED THE BILL INTO LAW WEDNESDAY THAT ALLOWS ABORTIONS AT ANY TIME IF DEEMED MEDICALLY NECESSARY BY A DOCTOR. THE LAW GOES INTO EFFECT 90 DAYS AFTER THE STATE LEGISLATURE'S SESSION ENDS IN THE COMING WEEKS. THE PREVIOUS LAW BANNED ABORTIONS AFTER A FETUS BECOMES VIABLE OUTSIDE THE WOMB, AT ROUGHLY 24 WEEKS. BUT IT ALLOWED AN EXCEPTION IF THE PATIENT'S LIFE IS AT RISK.

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS HAS VETOED A BILL THAT WOULD ALLOW THE STATE'S MINIMUM WAGE LAW TO APPLY TO FARM WORKERS, SAYING SHE SUPPORTS THE CONCEPT BUT HAD QUESTIONS ABOUT THE BILL'S LANGUAGE. MILLS SAID SHE'LL ISSUE AN EXECUTIVE ORDER TO FORMALLY REESTABLISH A STAKEHOLDER GROUP "TO ALLOW FOR A LONGER AND MORE IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS" OF THE BILL WITH THE GOAL OF ARRIVING AT "A SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF HOW TO IMPLEMENT A MINIMUM WAGE BILL FOR FARMWORKERS." SHE SAID SHE'LL PRESENT HER OWN BILL NEXT YEAR BASED ON THE CONCLUSIONS. HOUSE SPEAKER RACHEL TALBOT ROSS ACCUSED THE GOVERNOR OF "USING THE POWER OF HER OFFICE TO MAINTAIN INEQUALITY AMONGST MAINERS." LAWMAKERS WILL GET AN OPPORTUNITY TO OVERRIDE THE VETO NEXT WEEK.

NARCAN BILL

7/19

PA

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS SIGNED A BILL INTO LAW THIS WEEK THAT REQUIRES ALL E-M-S WORKERS IN MAINE TO BE TRAINED IN HOW TO ADMINISTER NARCAN. THE BILL, SPONSORED BY SENATOR JOE BALDACCI ALSO REQUIRES E-M-S PERSONNEL TO CARRY NARCAN ON THEIR PERSON AND BE PREPARED TO DISPENSE IT AS NEEDED. THE LAW GOES INTO EFFECT IN 90 DAYS.

TEMPORARY LICENSES FOR SPORTS BETTING IN MAINE COULD BE ISSUED BY NOVEMBER, ALLOWING MOBILE AND ONLINE WAGERING TO LAUNCH. THE MAINE GAMBLING CONTROL UNIT HAS SUBMITTED PROPOSED RULES GOVERNING SPORTS BETTING TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE FOR REVIEW. MOBILE AND ONLINE WAGERING IS EXPECTED TO ACCOUNT FOR 85% OF THE SPORTS BETTING MARKET IN MAINE. THAT WOULD PROVIDE A CONDUIT FOR REVENUE FOR NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES WHO WERE GIVEN CONTROL OF THE ONLINE SPORTS BETTING MARKET IN MAINE.

A NUMBER OF BILLS PASSED BY THE HOUSE AND SENATE THIS YEAR WON'T BE FUNDED. AFTER MAINE'S \$10.3 BILLION BIENNIAL BUDGET WAS SIGNED ON TUESDAY, STATE LEGISLATORS SPENT THE REST OF THE WEEK DECIDING HOW TO SPEND \$11.5 MILLION THAT WAS LEFTOVER. MAINE'S APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REVIEWED 266 UNFUNDED BILLS AND REJECTED THE VAST MAJORITY, INCLUDING APPROVED PROPOSALS TO MAKE DIAPERS TAX-FREE, TO TEST WELL WATER FOR PFAS, AND TO RAISE STARTING PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHER PAY TO \$50,000 OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. REJECTED BILLS CAN BE RE-CONSIDERED FOR FUNDING NEXT YEAR WITHOUT HAVING TO GO THROUGH COMMITTEE HEARINGS OR HOUSE AND SENATE FLOOR VOTES AGAIN.

RATE INCREASES

7/14

PA

THE MAINE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION HELD A PRESS BRIEFING ON THURSDAY ON RATE INCREASES THAT ARE GOING INTO EFFECT THIS MONTH. TV5 REPORTS CMP CUSTOMERS WILL SEE A NET INCREASE OF ABOUT FIVE-DOLLARS PER MONTH WHILE VERSANT CUSTOMERS WILL SEE A THIRTEEN-DOLLARS PER MONTH INCREASE. P-U-C CHAIR PHIL BARTLETT SAYS THE PURPOSE OF THE RATE INCREASE IS TO HELP SUPPORT INCREASING COSTS OF OPERATIONS AND TO ENHANCE RELIABILITY IN THE SYSTEM. HE SAYS BOTH COMPANIES FILED FOR A RATE INCREASE, WHICH WAS APPROVED WITH STIPULATIONS REQUIRING THEM TO MEET SERVICE QUALITY METRICS. IF THEY DON'T, THERE ARE PENALTIES THAT WOULD RESULT IN CUSTOMER REFUNDS.

LAWMAKERS, THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE AND OTHER PARTIES HAVE REACHED AN AGREEMENT TO OVERCOME GOVERNOR JANET MILLS' OPPOSITION TO LABOR PROVISIONS IN AN OFFSHORE WIND DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL. MILLS VETOED THE BILL BECAUSE SHE FEARED IT CUT OUT THOUSANDS OF WORKERS AND TIP THE SCALES IN FAVOR OF OUT-OF-STATE COMPANIES. THE COMPROMISE LEAVES HALF OF THE JOBS FOR UNIONIZED WORKERS AND HALF FOR NON-UNION COMPANIES LIKE MAINE'S CIANBRO CORP. THAT SETS A PATH TOWARD FINAL APPROVAL BY THE MAINE SENATE AND HOUSE WHEN THEY MEET LATER THIS MONTH. THE BILL CALLS FOR THE STATE TO PROCURE 3 GIGAWATTS OF ELECTRICITY FROM OFFSHORE WIND TURBINES BY 2040.

PAY RAISE

7/14

PA

A PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE PAY FOR MAINE'S GOVERNOR AND LAWMAKERS HAS CLEARED THE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE AND WILL BE CONSIDERED BY THE FULL LEGISLATURE. THE BILL WOULD INCREASE THE GOVERNOR'S ANNUAL SALARY FROM \$70,000 TO \$125,000. THAT WOULD ALIGN WITH THE SALARIES OF CABINET MEMBERS AND STAFF. THE CURRENT SALARY FOR MAINE'S GOVERNOR IS THE LOWEST IN THE COUNTRY. THE LAST TIME IT WAS RAISED WAS IN 1987. UNDER A SEPARATE BILL, LAWMAKERS WOULD SEE THEIR SALARIES GROW FROM \$25,000 TO \$45,000 FOR THEIR TWO-YEAR TERMS. BOTH PROPOSALS WERE ENDORSED BY THE LEGISLATURE'S APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE ON WEDNESDAY.

NECEC

7/14

PA

PARTNERS ON A TRANSMISSION LINE PROJECT ,AIMED AT BRINGING CANADIAN HYDROPOWER TO THE NEW ENGLAND POWER GRID, ARE TRYING TO SORT OUT HOW COST INCREASES DURING LENGTHY LITIGATION WILL BE SHARED. A PROVISION IN A SPENDING BILL APPROVED BY THE MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE ON THURSDAY WOULD ALLOW THE CONTRACT TO BE RENEGOTIATED TO ACCOUNT FOR THE EXTRA COSTS. THE NEW ENGLAND CLEAN ENERGY CONNECT WAS ORIGINALLY GOING TO BE FULLY-FUNDED BY MASSACHUSETTS RATEPAYERS. BUT THE ADDITIONAL COSTS COULD BE SHARED BY DEVELOPERS.

PERC AUCTION

7/12

PA

THE FORECLOSURE AUCTION FOR THE TRASH PROCESSING PLANT IN ORRINGTON HAS BEEN POSTPONED. THE PENOBSCOT ENERGY RECOVERY COMPANY, OR PERC, WAS SUPPOSED TO BE AUCTIONED OFF TODAY BUT THE AUCTION HAS BEEN MOVED TO AUGUST 9TH. ACCORDING TO TV5, THE STILL-OPERATIONAL POWER PLANT AND WASTE PROCESSING SYSTEM INCLUDES 12 BUILDINGS. IT WAS BUILT IN THE 1990S TO SERVICE MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE ACROSS EASTERN, CENTRAL, AND MIDCOAST MAINE. THERE'S NO WORD ON WHY THE AUCTION WAS POSTPONED.

THE BANGOR CITY COUNCIL HAS APPROVED \$415,000 IN ARPA FUNDING TO THE BANGOR AREA RECOVERY NETWORK. THE ORGANIZATION, ALSO KNOWN AS BARN, REQUESTED THE AMOUNT TO HELP COVER THE COSTS OF RENOVATING THEIR CURRENT LOCATION. THE BUILDING WAS BUILT IN THE 1950S AND NEEDS UPDATES TO THE FOUNDATION, ELECTRICAL WIRING, AND MAKING THE PROPERTY MORE ACCESSIBLE FOR PEOPLE WHO LIVE WITH MOBILITY LIMITATIONS.

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS SIGNED A BILL INTO LAW ON TUESDAY THAT WILL ALLOW 16- AND 17-YEAR-OLD'S TO RECEIVE GENDER-AFFIRMING HORMONE THERAPY WITHOUT PARENTAL CONSENT IF THEY ARE DIAGNOSED WITH GENDER DYSPHORIA, ARE EXPERIENCING HARM, AND HAVE RECEIVED COUNSELING. SUPPORTERS OF THE BILL SAID THE HORMONE THERAPY WOULD SAVE THE LIVES OF TRANSGENDER CHILDREN WHO ARE CONSIDERING ENDING THEIR LIVES. BUT, OPPONENTS CLAIM THE THERAPY CAN CAUSE IRREVERSIBLE DAMAGE TO CHILDREN WHO ARE NOT FULLY DEVELOPED.

MEMBERS OF THE BANGOR FIREFIGHTERS UNION SPOKE OUT AT MONDAY NIGHT'S CITY COUNCIL MEETING TO SHARE THEIR FRUSTRATION OVER THE COUNCIL'S DECISION-PROCESS REGARDING ARPA FUNDS. THE CITY RECEIVED ROUGHLY \$16 MILLION IN AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT FUNDING, AND HAS BEEN RECEIVING APPLICATIONS FOR GRANTS. ACCORDING TO TV5, AS THE PROCESS HAS UNFOLDED, UNION MEMBERS HAVE FELT AS IF OFFICIALS WERE LEAVING THEM BEHIND AFTER ENDURING DAUNTING ADJUSTMENTS DURING THE PANDEMIC. THE UNION SAYS "MEMBERS ARE BURNT OUT, UNDERPAID, OVERWORKED, AND UNDERVALUED." ACCORDING TO THE CITY AGENDA, ONLY ONE ORGANIZATION IS ON THE VERGE OF APPROVAL, HOWEVER, NOTHING IS FINAL AND OFFICIALS HAVE NOT YET DECIDED ON HOW TO DISTRIBUTE THE FUNDS.

THE MAINE LEGISLATURE IS RECONVENING TODAY TO TACKLE GOVERNOR JANET MILLS' VETO OF A TRIBAL RIGHTS BILL. ACCORDING TO THE KENNEBEC JOURNAL, THE BILL WOULD GIVE THE WABANAKI TRIBES OF MAINE FULL ACCESS TO FEDERAL TRIBAL BENEFITS THAT ARE NOT RELATED TO GAMBLING, CLEAN WATER, OR MAJOR CRIMES. TRIBAL LEADERS GATHERED FRIDAY, AFTER MILLS' ISSUED HER LONG-EXPECTED VETO, AND BLASTED THE GOVERNOR FOR NOT GIVING THEM ACCESS TO THE SAME FEDERAL TOOLS THAT EVERY OTHER FEDERALLY RECOGNIZED TRIBE HAS TO ACHIEVE ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE. THE BILL WON VETO-PROOF MAJORITIES IN BOTH CHAMBERS ON ITS WAY TO MILLS' DESK. SUPPORTERS ARE HOPEFUL LAWMAKERS WILL VOTE TO OVERRIDE.

GOVERNOR JANET MILLS HAS DELIVERED A SETBACK TO NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES IN MAINE SEEKING GREATER SOVEREIGNTY. SHE VETOED A PROPOSAL FRIDAY AIMED AT ENSURING MOST FEDERAL LAWS APPLY TO THEM DESPITE THE LAND CLAIMS SETTLEMENT ACT OF 1980. THE GOVERNOR SAYS THE NEW BILL IS VAGUE AND CONFUSING, AND WOULD LEAD TO COSTLY AND LENGTHY LAWSUITS. THE MILLS ADMINISTRATION CONTENDS THERE HAVE BEEN PROTRACTED LAWSUITS EVEN WHEN THE LAW IS CLEARLY SPELLED OUT. BUT THE VETO MAY NOT BE THE FINAL WORD. THE TRIBES URGED LAWMAKERS TO DISREGARD THE GOVERNOR'S ARGUMENTS, AND BOTH THE MAINE HOUSE AND SENATE PREVIOUSLY APPROVED THE BILL WITH MAJORITIES BIG ENOUGH TO OVERRIDE THE VETO.