

November 20, 2023

WHAT'S UP IN AUGUSTA?



Thanksgiving Edition



The 131st Convenes January 3rd:

Last week, the Legislative Council of the 131st met and reviewed the list of Bill Titles for the session and voted to either approve their inclusion or reject. [You can see that list here](#). At this time, the list is subject to evolve again as [rejected titles are appealed and re-reviewed](#).

Your MAR Gov't Affairs team has been engaging with the Joint Standing Committees of the Maine Legislature already! But wait, there have been committee meetings? **YES--AND Public Hearings!** Typically, legislative committees do not meet when the legislature is not in session, makes sense right? *(insert shrug emoji)* In the past, committee meetings outside of the session are reserved for stakeholders discussions and updates, however since October, several committees that the MAR engages with, have held public hearings, meetings and work sessions. The MAR Gov't Affairs Team has been closely monitoring for engagement opportunities prior to the session. In the coming weeks we will be speaking with State Senate and House leadership and continuing to prepare for the session ahead.

Maine Legislature releases a study aiming to better determine our state's housing needs:

In October, the Maine Legislature released a housing study, here are some key findings:

Reasons for increased demand, and low supply:

- Sudden in-migration: Maine experienced increased in-migration from out of state in recent years, concentrated in York and Cumberland Counties but distributed across the state. These in-migrants have higher incomes on average than existing Mainers and are able to pay more for homes
- Declining labor force due to aging population: Maine's population is aging, resulting in a declining labor force. This impacts both the kinds of homes needed to accommodate a retiring population and homes needed to enable employers to attract more workers to the



state to fill open job positions

- More households seeking asylum: Generally have very low incomes in the short-term as they await federal work authorization.

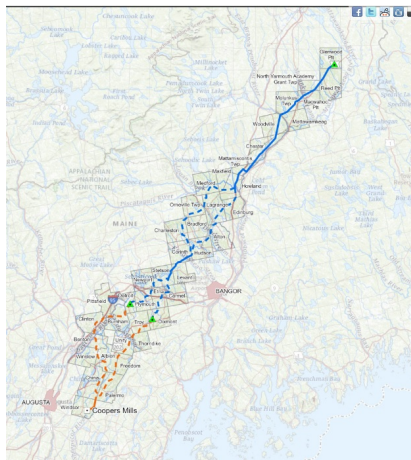
Maine's housing underproduction by region:

Table 1: Historic Underproduction and Future Need by Region

Region	Historic Underproduction	Future Need (2021 – 2030)	Total
Coastal	21,200	24,200 – 28,000	45,400 – 49,200
Central Western	13,000	9,700 – 11,700	22,700 – 24,700
Northeastern	4,300	4,000 – 6,100	8,300 – 10,400
Maine	38,500	37,900 – 45,800	76,400 – 84,300

*The **Coastal Region** consists of Cumberland, Hancock, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Waldo, and York Counties is the most heavily populated of the three regions and is currently home to 55% of the state's jobs in 2023. **Central Western Region** consists of Androscoggin, Franklin, Kennebec, Oxford, Piscataquis, and Somerset Counties. **Northeastern region** is the smallest and most rural of the three regions, consisting of Aroostook, Penobscot, and Washington Counties.

[Read the Full Study here](#)



Impacted by the LS Power Grid?

Do you live or do business in the areas being impacted by the LS Power Grid? Here are some resources to assist in providing feedback and voice concerns.

If interested parties were not able to attend one of the open house meetings that LS Power hosted this summer, you can [still review maps and project documents](#), as well as fill out a landowner [contact form on the LS website](#)

An update from the Governor's Energy Policy Office:

Once LS Power identifies a final "preferred route," the company will next need to apply for several permits and approvals from several state and federal agencies. LS Power will need to submit a petition to the [Commission](#) for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN); complete environmental and land assessments, engineering and geotechnical studies; and prepare materials for permit applications to the [Maine Department of Environmental Protection](#), [Maine Land Use Planning Commission](#), [Maine Department of Transportation](#), the [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers](#), and several municipalities. Each of these agencies have a robust review process in place for reviewing permit applications which include the opportunity for public comment or engagement. Interested parties can engage with these regulatory agencies and the companies involved directly throughout the process. Contact information for each agency has been linked above.

WOTUS New Rule:

Earlier this year, there was a lot of discussion around "WOTUS" or Waters of the United States and

lack of definitions for "relatively permanent waterbody" and federal jurisdiction around "ephemeral features," which encompasses any area that temporarily retains water. The policy as put forth remained ambiguous, resulting in changes that would task the U.S. EPA or Department of the Army (the agencies) with determining on a case by case basis if a body or system of water now falls under federal management. A [final ruling was determined on September 8th](#) as a result of the Supreme Court decision in the case of Sackett v. EPA. No public comments or stakeholder engagement was considered as part of the final changes to the rule in 2023. [Our partners at the National Association of Homebuilders provide more information and impacts to our industry.](#)

Additional Resources:

- [WOTUS Fact Sheet on Final Rule](#)
- [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#)
- [Clean Water Act Jurisdictional Map](#)



Maine Connectivity Aims to Expand Broadband Services- Seeking Public Comment

Maine Connectivity Authority (MCA) is a quasi-government agency tasked with expanding access to reliable, high-speed and affordable internet service across Maine. They are currently seeking public comments on the [Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment Program \(BEAD\)](#) which is funded through the federal Infrastructure Law. Maine was awarded a grant of \$272 million that will bring critical resources to fund broadband infrastructure and digital equity for the entire state. The BEAD program prioritizes Broadband Serviceable Locations (BSLs) that are unserved (less than 25/3 Mbps) and underserved (less than 100/20 Mbps) statewide. [Learn more about the proposal and timeline here](#)

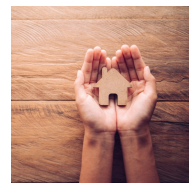
BEAD Initial Proposal Public Comment Sessions:

[Tuesday, Nov. 28th 9am-10am](#)

[Thursday, Nov. 30th 12pm-1:15pm](#)

ADU Rules & Information:

Need some more clarity around Maine's ADU (Accessory Dwelling Unit) laws? [Maine's Department of Economic and Community Development \(DECD\)](#) has one more Q & A session in November to help address questions you may have.



[Tuesday, November 28, 2023, 10:30-11:30am](#) (No RSVP required)

For additional questions: Email housing.decd@maine.gov

The MAR office is in Augusta- but we want to know *"What's Up" for YOU in 2024!*

As we plan for 2024, its essential that we hear from you and what you would like to learn more about- please fill out this 1 minute survey to tell us what is top of mind for you in 2024!

What do you want to hear about in 2024?



MAINE ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®
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MEET AND GREET
YOUR STATE LEGISLATORS

23 JANUARY, 2024
4:30PM-6:30PM

SENATOR INN
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REALTORS® Political Action Committee
MAINE ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® PAC

For information or questions, please contact: claire@mainerealtors.com 207-622-7501

January 23, 2024:
MAR Legislative Meet & Greet

March 5, 2024:
Presidential Primary Election

April 2, 2024
Maine REALTOR Rally Day!

May 4 - 9, 2024:
NAR "RLM" Meeting in D.C.

More details to come...

We are thankful for our members and the hard work you do everyday to bring more Mainers into homeownership and for your continued efforts to protect private property rights!



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Questions?

Claire Berger, MAR Communications & Government Affairs Manager



Sent by byclaire@mainerealtors.com powered by



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