

February 12, 2024

WHAT'S UP IN AUGUSTA?

2024



Common Sense Governance, Righting the Wrong:

LD 1454: (MAR 2-Oppose)

In the last issue of "What's Up..." we discussed [LD 1454: An Act Regarding the Distribution of Revenue from the Real Estate Transfer Tax](#) and its sponsored amendment that was far flung from the bill's original intent. The proposed amendment would have created a graduated transfer tax increase that would allow for excess RETT revenues collected to be used for non-housing initiatives. A proposal that **MAR Strongly Opposes**. Hang with me...getting to the punch...

Common sense is so rare these days, it should be classified as a super power



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After a MAR did a targeted Call for Action to the Taxation Committee, It turns out the Legislative Joint Standing Committee for Taxation members *ALSO* felt the approach to this bill's amendment was ALL wrong. Co-sponsors of the bill spoke out against it, as did the committee chair. All felt the manner in which this bill was presented did not afford the Legislature NOR the people of Maine fair process to review, digest and speak up regarding its amended proposal. It was in turn, ***Voted Ought Not to Pass*** out of the Taxation Committee.

LD 1893: (MAR 2-Oppose) [An Act to Allow a Municipality to Impose a Fee on Short-term Rentals for the Benefit of That Municipality](#) also had a sponsored amendment presented at the public hearing. Ultimately, the Taxation Committee **voted Ought Not to Pass** based on General Fund impacts of taking \$36 million away with 2% allocation from the 9% lodging tax to local municipalities. There were additional concerns that local municipalities' ability to properly prepare for administration of this change simply was not feasible given its significant administrative burden.

LD 1904: (MAR 2-Oppose) [An Act to Enact the Maine Fair Chance Housing Act](#) would have prohibited a housing provider from considering an applicant's criminal history as part of the tenant application process. It would have also made it possible to file a grievance with the Maine Human Rights Commission if a person felt they were denied rental housing on the basis of their criminal history by a housing provider. This would in-turn allow possible civil action in court. BUT alas, on February 6th, the Legislature's Judiciary Committee **voted Ought Not to Pass** unanimously on the proposal.

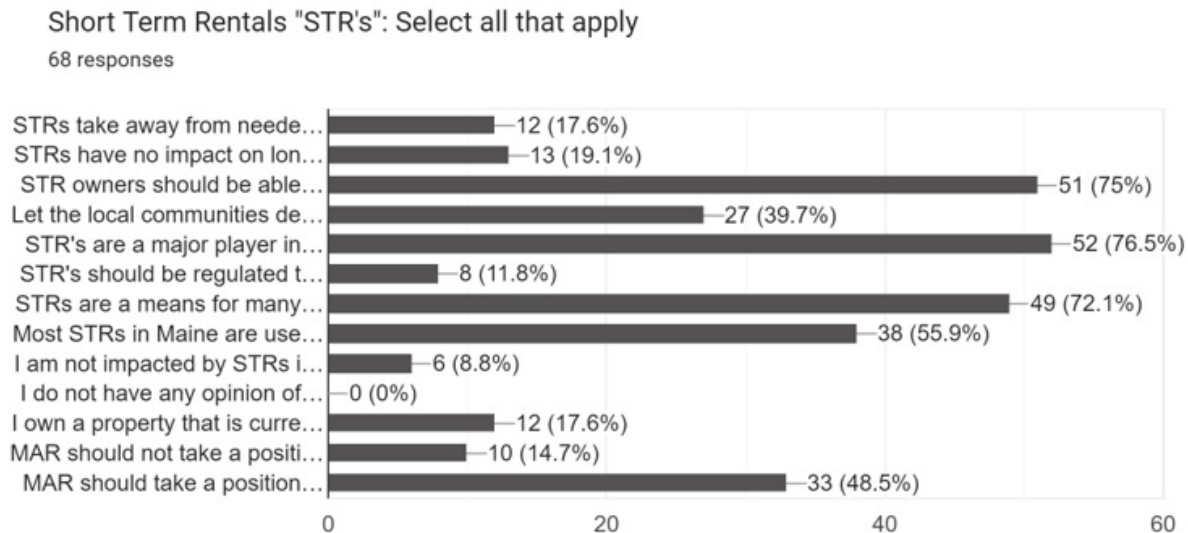


How does MAR prioritize our positioning on proposed bills? Support | Oppose | Neither For Nor Against | Monitor

The lobbying efforts are incremental:

- 4) A 4 indicates monitor only – for information purposes
- 3) A 3 with a Support, Oppose, or Neither For Nor Against will receive written testimony only – some general lobbying to keep the bill on track. A 3M is a watch status.
- 2) A 2 with a Support, Oppose, or Neither For Nor Against will receive verbal and written testimony, higher level of lobbying including member engagement to influence the outcome. A 2M is generally reserved for “concept drafts” where the bill text hasn’t been released.
- 1) A 1 with a Support, Oppose or Neither For Nor Against will receive verbal and written testimony, and the very highest level of lobbying using all strategies to achieve the desired outcome.

We asked about Short Term Rentals, here is what some had to say:



For reference to the full questions, or if you want to weigh in, here is [Topic #1: STR's- What do you think?](#)

Tell us more...

As you know, MAR has been seeking feedback on public policy topics in an effort to better prepare for updates to our [Public Policy Statement](#) later in the year. We still need your input around **different subject areas as they relate to real estate, private property rights and the economy**. Please consider answering these 1-2 question polls to ensure your voice is heard on these important policy topics. (All submissions are anonymous) Click on the button below for our next subject area.





Regulatory Happenings:

Maine DEP: Shoreland Zoning & Storm Recovery

Be sure to review this notice from the [Maine Department of Environmental Protection](#) as it relates to Shoreland Zoning and damages from the recent storms and flooding. [Read it now!](#)

Disaster Related Aid from FEMA available

Highlights: On February 6th Governor Mills and the [Federal Emergency Management Agency](#) (FEMA) announced the opening of two Disaster Recovery Centers to help residents impacted by the December 17-21, 2023 storm apply for Federal disaster assistance.

- Homeowners, renters, and businesses can apply for low-interest disaster loans at sba.gov/disaster. You can also call the SBA's Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information.

[Read the full release here.](#)
[Flood and Resource Hub](#)



Maine Primary Elections are "Semi-Open", what does that even mean?

Historically, Primary elections are for registered party member voting only--that means if you are registered with one of Maine's 4 political parties (Democratic, Green Independent, Libertarian, and Republican) and you have a candidate registered to run in the primary you could vote--well that has changed in Maine:

"If someone is unenrolled (has no party affiliation), then they can vote in any ONE party's primary of their choice. This applies to the Presidential and State Primaries." **SO**...If you're an unenrolled voter, you can now choose to vote Democratic or Republican in the primary without enrolling in that political party.

[Learn more here about changes to voting in Maine!](#)

Have you relocated recently? Ensure you are properly registered to vote for the Maine Primary Election on March 5, 2024. [Check your status and voting location here.](#)

Register to Vote Online



Federal Advocacy Efforts:

What has NAR been advocating for at the Federal level for us?

- [Housing Affordability and Availability](#)
- [Protecting Rights, Expanding Access, Building Prosperity](#)

[Learn more about NAR's advocacy efforts and programs](#)



March 5, 2024: Presidential Primary Election

June 11, 2024: State Primary Election

April 2, 2024: Maine REALTOR® Rally Day!

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

Schedule is avail. & [Registration Opens 2/14](#)



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Questions?

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