



SEN. CRAIG V. HICKMAN, SENATE CHAIR
REP. ANNE-MARIE MASTRACCIO, HOUSE CHAIR

MEMBERS:

SEN. MIKE TIPPING
SEN. JILL C. DUSON
SEN. JEFF TIMBERLAKE
SEN. RICK BENNETT
SEN. BRADLEE T. FARRIN
REP. ANN HIGGINS MATLACK
REP. ADAM R. LEE
REP. MICHAEL H. LEMELIN
REP. CHAD R. PERKINS
REP. JOHN M. EDER

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE
GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

MEETING SUMMARY
January 24, 2025

Call to Order

The Chair, Senator Hickman, called the Government Oversight Committee to order at approximately 9:32 a.m.

ATTENDANCE

Senators: Senator Hickman, Senator Bennett, Senator Duson, Senator Tipping, and Senator Timberlake

Representatives: Representative Mastraccio, Representative Eder, Representative Lee, Representative Lemelin, Representative Matlack, and Representative Perkins

Legislative Staff: Peter Schleck, Director, OPEGA
Jennifer Henderson, Senior Analyst, OPEGA
Kari Hojara, Senior Analyst, OPEGA
Hillary Risler, Analyst, OPEGA
Jennifer Greiner, GOC Clerk

Introduction of Committee Members

The members of the Committee introduced themselves.

New Business

(To watch this meeting - the recorded Live Stream can be viewed here: [January 24, 2025 GOC Meeting](#))

Meeting Summary – January 10, 2025

(A copy of this Meeting Summary can be found here: [January 10, 2025 GOC Meeting Summary](#))

The Committee accepted and approved this meeting summary.

Committee Orientation

Sen. Hickman welcomed Ian McKnight and Benjamin Eikey from the Levin Center for Oversight and Democracy to present to the Committee an orientation, “Best Practices in Legislative Oversight”.

Handouts from this presentation may be found here: [Levin Center Handout](#)

The slides from this presentation may be found here: [Levin Center Presentation Slides](#)

Next, Sen. Hickman put the Committee at ease until 1:10 pm for a break.

Committee Orientation (Continued)

Rep. Mastraccio called the meeting back to order at approximately 1:15 pm.

Rep. Mastraccio welcomed Jennifer Henderson and Kari Hojara, Senior Analysts from OPEGA’s Tax Team, to provide the Committee with an orientation on the Tax Expenditure Review Process.

Orientation slides can be found here: [GOC Tax Expenditure Process Orientation Slides](#)

Other materials provided to the Committee during the orientation include the following:

- [Tax Expenditure Review Flowchart](#)
- [Letter from 131st GOC to 132nd GOC RE: PL 2023, Ch. 417](#)
- [Letter from 131st GOC to 132nd GOC RE: OPEGA Proposals in Response to PL 2023, Ch. 417](#)
- [Approved Tax Expenditure Review Schedule](#)
- [OPEGA Tax Expenditure Evaluations since 2020](#)
- [GOC Processing of OPEGA Tax Expenditure Reports](#)
- [30-Day Limited Tax Analysis Projects Guide](#)
- [Executive Summary of the OPEGA Evaluation of the Credit for Paper Manufacturing Facility Investment](#)
- [Executive Summary of the OPEGA Evaluation of the Credit for Maine Shipbuilding Facility Investment](#)

- [Executive Summary of the OPEGA Evaluation of the Research Expense Tax Credit \(R&D Credit\)](#)
- [Executive Summary of the OPEGA Evaluation of Visual Media Incentives](#)
- [Maine Film Office Visual Media Production Incentives Final Report](#)
- [List of LDs related to Tax before the 132nd Legislature](#)

Proposed Committee Rules

Rep. Mastraccio next invited Director Schleck to come speak to the Committee regarding the Proposed Committee Rules, and the Director was joined by OPEGA Analyst Hillary Risler.

Director Schleck noted the absence of a quorum for voting purposes and asked Chair Mastraccio if there was any preference to hold off on a Committee discussion of the new Proposed Committee Rules.

Motion and Committee Vote

Rep. Mastraccio asked the Committee if there was a Motion regarding the Proposed Committee Rules.

Rep. Perkins made a motion to table the discussion of the Proposed Committee Rules to the next Committee Meeting. The motion was seconded by Sen. Bennett. The motion was approved unanimously by all Committee Members present.

Director's Report

Next, Rep. Mastraccio invited Director Schleck to present the Director's Report.

Director Schleck first acknowledged, for the record, a number of requests for reviews received by GOC and OPEGA.

Director Schleck then discussed the Director's Response to PL 2023, Chapter 417, Section 10, regarding resource implications of New OPEGA Tax Expenditure Review Work Requirements. That response (revised by the Director following the meeting) can be found here: [OPEGA Director Report to Legislative Council per PL 2023 ch. 417 sec. 10](#)

Director Schleck stated that as new services by OPEGA have not yet been requested by the Taxation Committee, he seeks to hold off on requesting any resources outside of OPEGA's current resources. Director Schleck seeks for OPEGA to have a more holistic discussion with stakeholders regarding evolving work dynamics, more generally, including with the GOC and Taxation Committee. For the time being, Director Schleck would like to explore the following opportunities, to the extent they may be pursued within existing resources regarding tax work:

1. Considering whether to contract for Economic Modeling under close direction of OPEGA;
2. Exploring options for accepting summer interns to assist with research tasks.

Sen. Bennett stated agreement with OPEGA working within current resources for the time being, pending further developments.

Rep. Mastraccio stated she agrees with holding off asking for additional resources for OPEGA at this time, but would like to make sure OPEGA is able to ask for additional resources if/when it is warranted.

Director Schleck then spoke more specifically about new formal requests to the GOC and OPEGA for reviews in order to acknowledge their receipt pending further Committee discussion and consideration.

Director Schleck first went over a letter from Sen. Bennett and Sen. Tipping asking for a review of certain contracting aspects of the Juniper Ridge Landfill. Sen. Bennett and Sen. Tipping's letter can be found here: [Jan. 23, 2025 Letter from Sen. Bennett and Sen. Tipping to GOC](#)

Director Schleck then went over a letter from Rep. Perkins requesting the review of three matters:

1. To consider the request of former Assistant Senate Republican Leader Keim and Representative Arata to investigate the matter of election integrity in their letter to GOC dated Oct. 21, 2024 and attached to Rep. Perkins' request.
2. To investigate the actions of leadership and staff of the Office of Cannabis Policy (OCP) and the Department of Administrative and Financial Services (DAFS) for failing to provide the 2023 Annual Report to the Committee on Veterans and Legal Affairs as required by statute.
3. To begin an investigation into the administration of the Low-Income Heating Assistance Program by the Maine Housing Authority.

Rep. Perkins' letter can be found here: [Jan. 23, 2025 Letter from Rep. Perkins to GOC](#)

Director Schleck also acknowledged Rep. Boyer's Memo also requesting the GOC investigate DAFS and OCP regarding the missing 2023 Annual Report to the Veterans and Legal Affairs Committee. Rep. Boyer's Memo can be found here: [Jan. 22, 2025 Memo from Rep. Boyer to GOC](#)

Director Schleck referenced an OPEGA report from 2012 titled Communications Regarding a Computer System Weakness Resulting in MaineCare Claims Payments for Ineligible Individuals, stating this report may be an analogous example of a prior review that focused on who knew what and when, when was the Legislator informed, and what were the circumstances. Director Schleck spoke about the type of issue Rep. Boyer and Rep. Perkins is requesting to be investigated concerning OCP and DAFS, stating that OPEGA could build out a timeline of who knew what and when. A copy of the report referenced can be found here: [Communications Regarding a Computer System Weakness Resulting in MaineCare Claims Payments for Ineligible Individuals](#)

Next GOC Meeting Date and Planning

The next GOC Meeting is tentatively scheduled for February 14, 2025.

Adjourn

Rep. Mastraccio adjourned the Government Oversight Committee, without objection, at approximately 2:29 pm.