



Troy D. Jackson
President of the Senate

State of Maine
130th Maine Legislature

Ryan Fecteau
Speaker of the House

MEMO

To: Members of the 130th Legislature

From: Troy D. Jackson, President of the Senate
Ryan Fecteau, Speaker of the House

Date: January 14, 2021

Re: Information regarding Committee Meetings

During the *Chairs and Leads Orientation* that was held on Monday, January 11, 2021, a number of important questions were posed by the committee chairs and leads, and many critical issues were explored and discussed. Perhaps the most important issue concerns the physical presence of Legislators in the State House Complex during remote committee meetings; because this issue goes to the very heart of our ability this session to fulfill our legislative duties while ensuring the health and safety of the citizens of the State, we take this opportunity to strongly urge Legislators, unless they cannot otherwise connect to the meeting, to **not** be physically present in the State House Complex during remote meetings, and to help us preserve the limited capacity for onsite presence in the State House Complex for those few members who, due to issues such as inadequate internet access, would not otherwise be able to connect to and participate in the remote meeting.

Many of the other questions and issues raised at the *Chairs and Leads Orientation* have relevance to the entire legislative membership, and we share the following information summary to provide greater clarity to all legislative members:

Remote meetings. On the first day of session, the Legislature unanimously passed S.P. 9, “Joint Order, Authorizing Temporary Procedures To Ensure the Safe, Accountable and Transparent Operation of the Legislature during the COVID-19 Pandemic,” which facilitates our ability to conduct remote committee meetings. In accordance with that vote, the 130th Legislature has made preparations to conduct all committee meetings remotely, using an electronic platform. To reduce the spread of COVID-19 into members’ home communities, unless they cannot otherwise connect to a remote committee meeting, members are discouraged from being physically present in the State House Complex when they join remote meetings.

Please remember that a member who joins a remote meeting while physically located in the State House Complex must use an electronic device (laptop, tablet, or other device) to participate, and if there are other members in that space who are participating in a meeting, the member must use a headset or earbuds equipped with a microphone to avoid audio feedback issues.

Masks. A member who is physically present in legislative space must wear a protective face covering in accordance with the Legislative Council's COVID-19 Prevention Policy.

Limitations on room capacity. To comply with safety requirements regarding physical distancing of individuals, it is not possible to accommodate the physical presence of an entire committee in the committee room, with the exception of AFA. A member who feels it is absolutely necessary to join the remote committee meeting while physically located in the committee room must inform the committee chairs by email no later than 5:00 p.m. on the day before the committee meeting. If the number of members wishing to be physically present in a committee room exceeds the number who can safely be accommodated, preference will be given to members in the order in which they were named to serve on the committee.

Note that, with audience chairs removed from the rooms and with careful placement of seating, the capacities of each committee room are as follows:

- Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry: 7 Legislators
- Appropriations and Financial Affairs: 13 Legislators
- Criminal Justice and Public Safety: 6 Legislators
- Education and Cultural Affairs: 7 Legislators
- Energy, Utilities and Technology: 7 Legislators
- Environment and Natural Resources: 6 Legislators
- Health and Human Services: 7 Legislators
- Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services: 7 Legislators
- Inland Fisheries and Wildlife: 7 Legislators
- Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business: 5 Legislators
- Judiciary: 6 Legislators
- Labor and Housing: 5 Legislators
- Marine Resources: 7 Legislators
- State and Local Government: 7 Legislators
- Taxation: 7 Legislators
- Transportation: 7 Legislators
- Veterans and Legal Affairs: 6 Legislators

Digital committee files. Although committee clerks will be unable to print committee files for members, clerks will email updated digital files to members upon request. Members are encouraged to access the files electronically, or if they require paper files, to print the files at home or in their caucus offices.

Caucus zoom licenses. Each caucus in each committee will have access to a Zoom license.

We deeply appreciate your understanding and partnership in implementing the unanimously adopted Joint Order and by adhering to the COVID-19 Prevention Policy adopted by the Legislative Council. A commitment to this partnership will allow us to achieve our common goal of meeting the urgent needs of the People of the State of Maine and ensuring their safety and well-being.

We also want to thank the nonpartisan staff for their efforts to help us operate the Legislature safely, remotely and as efficiently as possible.