

MEMORANDUM

TO: MYCA Directors and Maine Summer Camp Members

Copy: Mary Ellen Deschenes

FROM: Jack Erler

DATE: March 31, 2012

RE: Governmental Affairs Report

Legislative

I now have reviewed a little over 300 LDs in this Second Session of the 125th Legislature. There will be very few new bills introduced and this Session is expected to end before mid-April.

This was a very light session for youth camps principally because the almost sole focus was on the ever growing hole in the State's budget caused by diminished revenue and errors in accounting at the Department of Health and Human Services.

The following legislative information is of interest to youth camps. This information is about laws that did not pass or are still uncertain to pass but as passed would not directly impact youth camps.

This year for the first year in more than two decades the legislature is not considering tax reform. I monitored a flurry of activity in the Taxation Committee during the summer months in which tax reform was considered. In the end none ever emerged. For a short period of time there was consideration of a bill defining for the first time criteria for obtaining a tax exemption. That bill also died in committee.

LD 1603 An Act To Amend the Law Relating to Concealed Firearms Locked in Vehicles. We were hopeful that this bill would repeal the law passed last year that permitted employees with a concealed weapon permit to bring their guns to work provided they kept it in their locked car, out of sight. Unfortunately the repeal failed.

LD 1744 An Act To Require Carbon Monoxide Detectors in Additional Residential Occupancies. This bill has been voted out of committee as Ought To Pass as Amended (OTPA) and is pending in the full legislature. If passed it would require new and renovated buildings including eating and lodging and lodging places to install carbon monoxide detectors. Such places do not include youth camps so if finally passed, this new law would not affect youth camps.

LD 1237 An Act To Prohibit Bullying in Schools. This bill has been voted out of committee as OTPA and is pending in the full legislature. If passed the bill would require school districts to establish an anti-bullying code. This would not apply to youth camps. However, once a policy is published, assuming the

bill passes, MYCA will publish it for your review to see how it compares to any anti-bullying policy camps may have.

Agencies

Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)

Last year we caused the law to be amended to permit the Health Inspection Program (HIP) of the DHHS to exempt certain youth camps from inspection. As a part of that same new law the HIP inspection schedule was changed from annual to every two year inspection.

Since the new became effective we have been working with HIP to add new regulations to carry out the purpose of the new law. Although our work there is not yet complete, we can report that new regulations will eventually be promulgated to exempt ACA Accredited youth camps from routine inspections. The new regulations will also apply to camps with a history passing inspections that provide a certificate of compliance to HIP.

At the same time we are working with DHHS on their 2011 Food Code revision applicable to youth camps. MYCA will report once that work is complete.

Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (IF&W)

We are currently working with IF&W to revise the Trip Leader Permit Regulations. This work partly results from Warden reports of problems on wilderness trips conducted by groups in Maine. Part of our effort is to re-educate IF&W about who licensed youth camps are so that reports about groups with problems will not be incorrectly attributed to youth camps.

In addition, we are working to re-establish more formal and regular interaction between youth camps and IF&W. Finally we are working on updating the requirements for Trip Leader Instructors and Trip Leader Permits to reduce any concern by IF&W appropriately attributable to youth camp wilderness tripping and harmonizing the IF&W and DHHS regulations.

Department of Conservation

The program to require leases/easements of State owned submerged land is continuing albeit rather slowly. It appears that non-profit camps are to get their easements first. We expect that any of you who have not yet begun or completed the leasing process will be involved before the end of this year. Again MYCA is asking camps to keep us advised as this process moves forward so that it can be determined if there is any action that should be taken to amend the submerged land law.

There appears again be no movement regarding permitting of swim areas. Our assumption is that with the budget deficit taking center stage there are not enough bureaucrats or not enough bureaucratic time to deal with this issue created by a poorly conceived and passed law three years ago.

Other Governmental Affairs Work

MYCA continues to work on a long term effort to build public and governmental awareness of the benefits to Maine of youth camps. In this regard, MYCA has had a preliminary meeting with the same Public Relations Agency that is working with Maine Summer Camps.

MYCA is working with ACA/NE and the New York association in their effort to publish a Northeast regional including the individual states in that region, Economic Impact Report.