

ANNUAL REPORT
MAINE LABOR RELATIONS BOARD
Fiscal Year 2015

This report is submitted pursuant to 26 M.R.S.A. §§ 968(7) (Supp. 2014) and 979-J(1) (2007).

Introduction

The mission of the Maine Labor Relations Board and its affiliated organizations, the Panel of Mediators and the State Board of Arbitration and Conciliation, is to foster and improve the relationship between public employees and their employers. The Maine Labor Relations Board (“Board”) protects the rights and enforces the responsibilities established by the four separate labor relations statutes covering Maine’s public sector employees. The Board does this by creating bargaining units, conducting secret ballot elections to certify, change or decertify bargaining agents, and processing prohibited practice complaints. The Panel of Mediators and the State Board of Arbitration and Conciliation provide dispute resolution procedures to assist parties in negotiating initial or successor collective bargaining agreements and in resolving contract grievance issues. The focus of this report is the activity of the Labor Board during the fiscal year.

The Board had requests for services from most segments of the public sector labor-management community during the past year. Overall demand for the Board's services increased compared with the previous year. For those parties who were engaged in mediation, settlements were difficult to achieve, resulting in sustained demand for fact-finding. Scarce resources to fund collective bargaining agreements have led to difficult negotiations and several prohibited practice complaints charge violations of the duty to negotiate in good faith.

Members of the Board are appointed by the Governor, confirmed by the Legislature, and serve four-year terms. Primary Public Chair Katharine I. Rand of Portland, Employee Representative Amie M. Parker of Lewiston, Alternate Employer Representative Richard L. Hornbeck of Bowdoinham, and Alternate Employee Representatives Wayne W. Whitney of

Brunswick and Robert L. Piccone of Portland continued to serve in their respective capacities throughout the year. In September, Governor LePage nominated Robert W. Bower, Jr., Esq., of Cumberland as Primary Employer Representative, replacing Karl Dornish, Jr., and Christine Riendeau of Durham as Alternate Employer Representative, replacing Patricia M. Dunn, Esq. Mr. Bower's and Ms. Riendeau's appointments were confirmed by the Legislature. In early February, Alternate Chair Abigail C. Yacoben resigned from the Board to accept employment in Arizona. Alternate Chair Susan L. Higgins resigned from the Board on April 7, 2015. Both Alternate Chair positions are vacant at the present time.

As in past years, the staff of the Board handled many inquiries from public employers and employees or their representatives, and members of the public. The staff is the primary source of information for persons interested in the operations and procedures of Maine's public sector labor laws. In instances that involved matters over which the Board has no jurisdiction, the staff continued the policy of providing some orientation for the inquirer, suggesting other agencies or organizations that might be helpful.

The Board's web site is the prime source for research of Board precedent, as the scope of collective bargaining issues addressed by Maine courts is quite limited and difficult to research on-line. The search engine used by the Board's web site draws on an extensive database of the Board's prohibited practice and representation appeals decisions, as well as Superior and Supreme Judicial Court opinions reviewing the Board's decisions. Access to this case law helps public employers, employees and bargaining agents to know the parameters of required or permitted conduct and to use such information to avoid violating the law. The web site also includes links to the statutes administered by the Board, the complete text of the Board's Rules and Procedures, the Board's forms, a bulletin board of current activities, and links to other state and federal labor relations agency sites. Since its inception the web site has been maintained and updated by Board staff. Over the years, the web site has been highly praised by the labor-management community.

Legislative Matters

Eight bills impacting the Board's jurisdiction were introduced for consideration in this year's Legislative Session.

L.D. 404. Under current law, public employers are permitted to agree with the bargaining agents that represent their employees to collect union dues from union members and service fees from bargaining unit employees who choose not to join the union and to remit such funds to the bargaining agent. The bill would have prohibited public employers from performing that function. The bill was not adopted by the Legislature

Three bills, L.D.'s 489, 1351 and 1353 all concerned the policy question of whether employees, who are represented by a bargaining agent but who choose not to become members of the union, may be required to pay a service fee for their share of the union's cost of representing the bargaining unit. L.D. 489 would have prohibited agreements that required the payment of union service fees by all private and public sector employees in Maine. The measure was not adopted. L.D. 1353 closely paralleled L.D. 489 and the sponsor's request to withdraw it was granted by the policy committee. L.D. 1351 also sought to prohibit mandatory union service fees; however the bill would have resulted in several unintended consequences and, noting that other bills better accomplished this result, the sponsor moved that L.D. 1351 ought not to pass at the beginning of the public hearing and the committee acceded to that request.

L.D. 530 would have amended the Municipal Public Employees Labor Relations Law to require at least one member of the Municipal Act employer body that has final authority to approve collective bargaining agreements to attend all bargaining sessions. Under current law, a Municipal Act employer may designate anyone to represent the management side in collective bargaining, so long as the designated representative has sufficient authority to negotiate a final tentative agreement, subject to ratification by the legislative body of the enterprise. The bill was not adopted.

L.D. 1010, as amended, would prohibit negotiations by public school employers and bargaining agents over the employer's decision to contract out non-instructional services or the elimination of positions resulting from the use of private contractors. Under current law, a Municipal Act employer is required to negotiate over the decision to contract out work that is being performed by employees who are represented by a bargaining agent. This means that, unless agreement is reached by the parties, the decision is subject to the statutory dispute resolution procedure--mediation, fact-finding, and interest arbitration. This bill was still pending before the Legislature on June 30th.

L.D. 1088, § C-3, Recommendations of the Right To Know Advisory Committee, applies to a conciliation process through which the State Board of Arbitration and Conciliation ("BAC"), upon request of the parties, attempts to resolve collective bargaining disputes. This process is rarely used (used once in 25 years) and is distinct from the BAC's statutory role under Maine's public sector collective bargaining laws. If settlement is not reached, the BAC makes a confidential report to the Governor and the Executive Director of the MLRB. Current law provides that if the parties have not resolved the dispute within 15 days after receipt of the report, either the Governor or the executive director may make the report public. The bill requires release of the report after the 15-day period. The Governor vetoed the bill on broad policy grounds, but the veto was not sustained and the bill became law. See, ch. 250 P.L. 2015.

L.D. 1319, as amended, would have required a study of the impact of the practice of state-compensated leave for employees to participate in activities related to the employees' collective bargaining agent, both in terms of the financial cost to the State and in terms of lost employee time, and the benefits of such leave to the State, and required a report of findings and recommendations by December 2, 2015. The measure was not adopted.

Bargaining Unit and Election Matters

During fiscal year 2015, the Board received 39 voluntary agreements or joint filings

for the establishment of or change in collective bargaining units. There were 19 of these filings in FY 14. Of the 39 FY 15 filings, 17 were for municipal or county government units, 17 were for K-12 educational units, and 5 were for state units. The unit agreements were filed by the following employee organizations:

<u>Maine Education Association</u>	14 agreements
(MSAD #45/Washburn Ed Techs Unit)	
(Wiscasset Educational Support Professionals Unit)	
(Wiscasset Certified Professionals Unit)	
(Lamoine Professional Staff Unit)	
(Hancock Professional Staff Unit)	
(Dayton Professional Staff Unit)	
(RSU 23 Professional Staff Unit)	
(Dayton Educational Support Staff Unit)	
(Hancock Professional Support Staff Unit)	
(Lamoine Professional Support Staff Unit)	
(Ellsworth Professional Support Staff Unit)	
(Ellsworth Professional Staff Unit)	
(RSU 23 Educational Support Staff Unit)	
(Athens Educational Support Personnel Unit)	
<u>Teamsters Union Local 340</u>	10
(Bar Harbor Water Division Unit)	
(Hancock County Jail Employees Unit)	
(Hancock County Law Enforcement Unit)	
(Hancock County Regional Communications Center Unit)	
(Eliot Town Office Unit - 2)	
(Town of Rangeley Administrative Unit)	
(Somerset County Corrections Supervisors Unit)	
(Fryeburg Public Works Unit)	
(Lincoln County Communications Supervisors Unit)	
<u>MSEA/SEIU</u>	7
(State of Maine Supervisory Services Unit) (4)	
(Maine Public Employees Retirement System) (3)	
<u>AFSCME Council 93</u>	2
(Ellsworth Waste Water Treatment Plant Unit)	
(Bangor Wastewater Treatment Plant Unit)	
<u>Laborers' International Union North America</u>	1
(Kennebec County Support Staff Unit)	
<u>RSU 63 Administration</u>	1
(Administration Unit)	
<u>AOS #81 Administration</u>	1
(Administration Unit)	

<u>Maine State Troopers Association</u> (Confidential Unit)	1
<u>Wiscasset Schools Administrators' Association</u> (Schools Administrators Unit)	1
<u>International Association of Fire Fighters</u> (Gray Fire Fighters Unit)	1

Of the 39 filings, 12 were for new units and 27 were for changes to existing units, 12 of which were due to school district reorganizations.

Six (6) unit determinations were filed in FY 15. Agreements were reached in 4 cases, and 2 cases are pending. Three (3) unit determination cases were carried forward from last year; agreements were reached in two cases and one went to hearing and decision. Four (4) unit clarification petitions were filed this year. These petitions seek changes in existing units. Two of the petitions were withdrawn, one agreement was reached and one case went to hearing and decision. One active unit clarification was carried forward into this year and it was subsequently withdrawn. Once a unit petition and response are filed, a member of the Board's staff contacts the parties and attempts to facilitate agreement on the appropriate bargaining unit. This involvement saves substantial time and litigation costs for public employers and bargaining agents. There were 12 unit petitions filed in FY 14.

The unit determinations were filed by the following parties:

<u>Teamsters Union Local 340</u> (MSAD #27 Fort Kent) (Town of Fryeburg) (Lincoln County)	3 requests
<u>AFSCME Council 93</u> (City of Bangor)	1
<u>International Association of Fire Fighters</u> (Town of Gray)	1
<u>National Correctional Employees Union</u> (State of Maine)	1

The unit clarifications were filed by the following parties:

<u>AFSCME Council 93</u> (Lewiston Housing Authority)	1 request
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<u>IAMAW District Lodge 4</u> (Town of Topsham)	1
<u>Maine Education Association</u> (Athens School Department)	1
<u>City of Saco</u> (Saco Worker's Alliance)	1

After the scope and composition of the bargaining unit is established, either by agreement or by unit determination, a secret ballot bargaining agent election is conducted by the Board. An election is held to determine the desires of the employees, unless a bargaining agent is voluntarily recognized by the public employer. During FY 15 there were 15 voluntary recognitions filed, involving the following employee organizations:

<u>Maine Education Association</u> (Wiscasset Educational Support Professionals Unit) (Wiscasset Certified Professionals Unit) (Lamoine Professional Staff Unit) (Hancock Professional Staff Unit) (Dayton Professional Staff Unit) (RSU 23 Professional Staff Unit) (Dayton Educational Support Staff Unit) (Hancock Professional Support Staff Unit) (Lamoine Professional Support Staff Unit) (Ellsworth Professional Support Staff Unit) (Ellsworth Professional Staff Unit)	11 voluntary recs.
<u>AFSCME Council 93</u> (Ellsworth Waste Water Treatment Plant Unit)	1
<u>RSU 63 Administration</u> (Administration Unit)	1
<u>AOS #81 Administration</u> (Administration Unit)\	1
<u>Wiscasset Schools Administrators' Association</u> (Schools Administrators Unit)	1

Eight (8) bargaining agent election requests were filed in FY 15; 9 elections were held, including matters carried forward from FY 14. The employee organizations were certified as the bargaining agent in 8 cases, and the employees opted for no representative in 1 case. There were no voluntary recognitions as a result of the petitions, and 3 election matters are pending. The results of the bargaining agent election petitions, including

carry-overs from FY 14, are as follows:

<u>Petitioner (Bargaining Unit)</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
<u>Teamsters Union Local 340</u>	
(Biddeford Airport Maintenance Worker Unit)	Teamsters certified
(Bar Harbor Water Division Unit)	No Rep. certified
(Rangeley Administrative Unit)	Teamsters certified
(Brunswick Parks & Rec. Maint. Workers Unit)	Teamsters certified
(Fryeburg Public Works Dept. Unit)	Teamsters certified
<u>AFSCME Council 93</u>	
(Readfield Town Employees Unit)	AFSCME certified
(Bangor Waste Water Treatment Plant Unit)	AFSCME certified
<u>Laborers Local Union 327</u>	
(Kennebec County Support Staff Unit)	Laborers' Union certified
<u>Maine Education Association</u>	
(MSAD #45/Washburn Ed Techs Unit)	MEA certified

In FY 14, there were 12 voluntary recognitions filed, 11 bargaining agent election requests received, and 6 elections held.

The number of requests for decertification/certification and straight decertification elections remained low again this year. The former type of petition involves a challenge by the petitioning organization to unseat and replace an incumbent as bargaining agent for bargaining unit members. In decertification petitions, no new union is involved; the petitioner is simply attempting to remove the incumbent agent. The Board received 4 decertification/bargaining agent election requests this year, compared with 3 last year and 3 in FY 14. In addition, the Board received 3 straight decertification election requests this year, compared with 1 last year and 1 in FY 13. While the rationale for these filing varied, the overriding reason appeared to be unit employee dissatisfaction with the modest wage and benefit changes negotiated by the incumbent bargaining agents during the severe economic downturn and the belief that a new bargaining agent, or the employees on their own, could do better. Six (6) elections were held. The results of the decertification/certification petitions were as follows:

<u>Petitioner (Bargaining Unit)</u>	<u>Incumbent Agent</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
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Maine Education Association (RSU 21 Bus Drivers, Mechanics & Bus Aides Unit)	Teamsters Union Local 340	MEA certified
National Correctional Employees Union (Kennebec County Corrections Unit)	Teamsters Union Local 340	NCEU certified
Waldo County Communications Assn., Maine Employees United (Waldo County Dispatchers Unit)	AFSCME Council 93	WCCA certified

As noted above, the Board received 3 straight decertification petitions in FY 15 and three were carried forward from FY 14. In one case, a petition to intervene was filed, resulting in a decertification/bargaining agent election. One election was held.

The results of the decertification petitions were as follows:

<u>Incumbent Agent</u>	<u>Bargaining Unit</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
AFSCME Council 93	South Portland Bus Operators	No Representative
Maine Education Assn.	Nobleboro ESP Unit	No Representative
Teamsters Union Local 340	Eliot Town Office Unit	No Representative

There were 8 election matters carried over from FY 14; consequently, there were 23 such matters requiring attention during the fiscal year, compared with 26 in FY 14.

Dispute Resolution

The Panel of Mediators is the cornerstone of the dispute resolution process for public sector negotiations. Its importance continues to be reflected in its volume of activity and in its credibility with the client community. The activities of the State mediators are summarized in this report and are more fully discussed in the Annual Report of the Panel of Mediators.

Interest mediation is the process through which individual State mediators assist parties in negotiating initial or successor collective bargaining agreements. The number of new interest mediation requests received during the fiscal year increased. There were 68 new requests filed this year compared with 51 last year. In addition to the new mediation

requests received during FY 15, there were 27 matters carried over from FY 14 that required mediation activity during the year. Thus, the total number of mediation matters requiring the Panel's attention in this fiscal year was 95, up from 87 cases in FY 14.

The most significant development in bargaining this year was the significant increase in the rate of settlement in mediation. While limited funds have steadily lowered the settlement rate over the past four years, this year's 16.8% improvement in the settlement rate reverses that trend. While resources continue to be scarce and the status of State-municipal revenue sharing was once again before the Legislature, the mediators report that negotiating parties were more optimistic this year regarding the availability of resources in coming years. In addition, the significant increase in the mediators' compensation implemented last year has resulted in parties being better prepared for mediation and better utilizing mediation sessions.

Fact-finding is the second step in the three step statutory dispute resolution process. In Fiscal Year 2015, 18 fact finding requests were filed. There were 17 requests received in FY 14. Of the 18 cases, plus 10 carried forward from FY 14, 21 cases went to hearing, 6 were conciliated at hearing, 13 decisions were issued, and 1 decision is pending. Three (3) petitions were withdrawn or otherwise settled, and 4 are pending. In FY 14, 19 fact-finding hearings were held. The following employee organizations were involved in requests for fact finding services this year:

<u>Maine Education Association</u>	6 requests
(MSAD 60 Teachers Unit)	
(MSAD 3 Teachers Unit)	
(RSU 4 Teachers Unit)	
(Auburn Food Services Unit)	
(CSD 3 Teachers Unit)	
(MSAD 15 Teachers Unit)	
<u>Teamsters Union Local 340</u>	6
(Oxford County Patrol Unit)	
(Ogunquit Clerical/Gen. Gov. Unit)	
(Gardiner Public Works Dept. Unit)	
(Ogunquit Public Works Dept. Unit)	

(Ogunquit Police Unit)	
(Mt. Desert Public works/Waster Water Unit)	
<u>National Correctional Employees Union</u>	3
(York County Sheriff's Dept. Unit)	
(Knox County Corrections, Communications, and Food Service Unit)	
(Cumberland County Corrections Unit)	
<u>Maine Association of Police</u>	1
(Auburn Patrol and Detective Unit)	

Interest arbitration is the third and final step in the statutory dispute resolution process. Under various public employee statutes administered by the Board and unless agreed otherwise by the parties, an interest arbitration award is binding on the parties on non-monetary issues. Unresolved questions concerning salaries, pensions, and insurance are subject to interest arbitration, but an award on these matters is only advisory.

The Municipal Public Employees Labor Relations Law, which applies to the overwhelming majority of bargaining situations, does not require parties to notify the Board when they are invoking mandatory interest arbitration. The law does require that arbitration awards be filed with the Board; however, they usually are not. In FY 2015, at least two matters were scheduled to go to interest arbitration.

Prohibited Practice Complaints

One of the Board's main responsibilities in administering the public sector collective bargaining process is to hear and rule on prohibited practice complaints. Formal hearings are conducted by the full, three-person Board in such matters. Twenty-nine (29) complaints were filed in FY 15. This represents a slight decrease from the FY 14 level. For the last 15 years, including the current year, the number of complaints filed each year has fluctuated from a low of 5 to a high of 31, with the mean being 19.1. Many of the complaints received during the past year charged violations of the duty to negotiate in good faith.

In addition to the 29 complaints filed in FY 15, there were 25 carry-overs from FY 14, compared with 31 complaints and 14 carry-overs last year. Board panels conducted 5

evidentiary hearings on 5 cases during the year, compared with 2 evidentiary hearings in FY 14. In cases where there are no material facts in dispute, the parties submit their controversy to the Board through a stipulated record and written arguments. The Board issued 4 formal decisions and orders. Board chairs, sitting as prehearing officers, held conferences in 13 cases, compared with 8 in FY 14. Nine (9) cases are being held in abeyance at the request of the parties to allow them to try to resolve their differences. Twenty-two (22) complaints were dismissed or withdrawn at the request of the parties, including two after hearing, and 7 were dismissed by the executive director. Four (4) complaints await prehearing and/or hearing. Seven (7) cases are being processed.

The formal decisions and orders issued by the Board in prohibited practice cases this year were as follows:

International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, District Lodge 4, Local Lodge 559 v. Town of Madison, Case No.15-10, June 4, 2015. The Board concluded that the Town violated §964(1)(E) and (1)(A) by failing to apply the established practice for granting wage increases to those employees in the new bargaining unit while the Town and the Machinists Union were negotiating the bargaining unit's first contract.

Andrew D. Martin v. AFSCME Council 93, Case No. 14-29, March 20, 2015. The Board concluded that the Union violated §964(2)(A) by failing to comply with the collective bargaining agreement's requirements for collecting a service fee and by causing a regular deduction from the Complainant's paycheck for fair share fees without giving him the procedural protections required by *Chicago Teachers Union v. Hudson*, 475 U.S. 292 (1986).

Teamsters Union Local 340 v. Cumberland County Commissioners, Case No. 15-11 February 18, 2015. The Board dismissed the Union's complaint that the County failed to bargain in good faith by refusing to agree to the Union's proposals or to offer any counter-proposals on a particular subject because under the "totality of the circumstances" test, the

County's conduct demonstrated a sincere desire to reach an agreement.

Teamsters Union Local 340 v. Oxford County, Case No. 15-05, February 5, 2015. The Board found a 964(1)(A) violation in concluding that the Sheriff's cancellation of the outside details for two months, after receiving an arbitration decision on scheduling the details, could reasonably be said to interfere with the free exercise of employee rights under the Act.

The executive director has continued to be actively involved settling prohibited practice cases through telephone conferences and personal meetings with the parties' representatives on the day of the hearing. If the effort is unsuccessful, the Board members are present, ready to convene a formal evidentiary hearing.

Prohibited practice complaints, with the respondent noted in parenthesis, were filed by the following this year:

<u>Teamsters Union Local 340</u>	11 complaints
(Boothbay Harbor – 3)	
(Biddeford – 2)	
(Oxford County – 2)	
(Augusta)	
(Cumberland County)	
(Ogunquit)	
(Warren)	
<u>Maine Education Assn.</u>	6
(Ellsworth)	
(Lewiston)	
(MSAD 58)	
(MSAD 60)	
(RSU 3)	
(South Portland)	
<u>AFSCME Council 93</u>	2
(Penobscot County – 2)	
<u>Fraternal Order of Police</u>	2
(Madison)	
(Washington County)	
<u>IAMAW</u>	2
(Madison – 2)	

<u>Individuals</u>	2
(State of Maine)	
(Old Orchard Beach WWEA)	
<u>Androscoggin County EA</u>	1
(Androscoggin County)	
<u>Biddeford</u>	1
(IAFF)	
<u>NCEU</u>	1
(Cumberland County)	
<u>Ogunquit</u>	1
(Teamsters)	

Unit Appeals

The Board is authorized by statute to decide appeals of unit-related decisions issued by the executive director regarding unit composition and election issues. This year the Board considered one unit appeal: *AFSCME Council 93 and Town of Readfield*, Case No. 15-UDA-01, December 18, 2014. The Board affirmed the conclusion in 14-UD-05 that the Town Clerk must be excluded from the unit pursuant to 26 M.R.S.A. § 962(6)(B) because she was appointed to office as specified in that provision.

Interpretive Rulings

The labor relations statutes authorize the Board to issue non-binding interpretive rulings to assist parties in understanding the provisions of the law and, thereby, avoiding violating the statutes. No requests for interpretive rulings were received this year and the Board did not issue any on its own initiative.

Court Appeals

In *Maranacook Area School Association v. R.S.U. No. 38 School Board*, Kennebec County Superior Court (Mullen, J.) No. AP-14-38, December 11, 2014, the Superior Court affirmed the Board's Status Quo Determination issued on May 14, 2014, in which the Board held that enforcement of a salary step increase provision in the parties expired collective bargaining agreement was precluded by the Law Court's holding in *Board of Trustees of the*

University of Maine System v. Associated COLT Staff of University of Maine System, 659 A.2d 842 (Me. 1995). The subsequent appeal of this decision to the Law Court was withdrawn by agreement of the parties prior to briefing.

Summary

The following chart summarizes the filings for this fiscal year, along with the previous five years, and percent change from year to year:

	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015
Unit Determination/ Clarification Requests Number filed--	12	+33% 16	-37.5% 10	-20% 8	+50% 12	-17% 10
Agreements on Bargaining Unit (MLRB Form #1) Number filed--	31	+16% 36	-41.7% 21	+33% 28	-32% 19	+105% 39
Voluntary Recognitions (MLRB Form #3) Number filed--	13	+61.5% 13	-46% 7	-28.6% 5	+14% 12	+25% 15
Bargaining Agent Election Requests Number filed--	11	0% 11	-37.5% 8	+125% 18	-38.9% 11	-27% 8
Decertification Election Requests Number filed--	0	+400% 4	+50% 6	-83.3% 1	+400% 5	-40% 3
Decert./Certification Election Requests Number filed--	4	+37.5% 19	-26% 14	-78.6% 3	-- 3	+33% 4
Mediation Requests Number filed--	64	-15.6% 54	+27.8% 69	-33.3% 46	+10.9% 51	+33% 68
Fact-Finding Requests Number filed--	14	-14.3% 12	+91.7% 23	-13% 20	-16% 17	+6% 18
Prohibited Practice Complaints Number filed--	15	+17% 18	+33.3% 24	-37.5% 15	+106% 31	-9.3% 29

The above table indicates that the demand for the Board's different services generally increased during the fiscal year. The agency's leading business indicator, the level of demand for interest mediation, together with the high number of fact-findings, reflect the difficulty in concluding agreements in the current economic climate. For the past several years we have been predicting that public sector organizational activity may be nearing the point of saturation, given that the Board has been in existence since 1969 and many units, particularly education and firefighter units, predated the establishment of the agency. Consistent with these predictions, there was a decrease in organizational activity for new bargaining units this year.

During FY 15, public sector labor-management relations in Maine continued to mature, with parties relying on the statutory dispute processes to settle their differences. The development of more mature labor relations is evidenced by the strong demand for mediation services and the continued willingness by the parties to settle prohibited practice complaint cases. In sum, the Board's dispute resolution services fostered public sector labor peace during this very difficult and challenging year.

Dated at Augusta, Maine, this 1st day of July, 2015

Respectfully submitted,

Marc P. Ayotte
Executive Director
Maine Labor Relations Board