

## LD 290 Property Tax Stabilization for Seniors Repealed by State Legislature

The LD 290 “Property Tax Stabilization for Senior Citizens” program, enacted in August 2022, was recently repealed by the Maine Legislature. The program had allowed Maine seniors 65 and older who owned a permanent residence for at least 10 years and were receiving (or eligible for) a homestead exemption, to freeze taxes at the previous year’s level regardless of income.

The repeal of this program means there will be **NO REAPPLICATION PROCESS** and no need to follow-up with the Assessing Department in August/September for a December 1<sup>st</sup> filing deadline as previously communicated.

Although the program has been repealed, initial applications will still be administered for the tax bill due in November 2023 and March 2024. As a result, approximately 550 eligible Belfast applicants will only be responsible for the "frozen" property tax bill amount for the 2023-2024 billing cycle—this amount will be equal to the tax amount the owner was billed in 2022-2023.

It is important to note that these are State programs and while the City plays a role in the administration of them, the City is not responsible for the policy objectives of these initiatives. **Any questions or concerns owners have regarding this program should be directed to your legislative representative.** To find your representative, please visit: <https://legislature.maine>

To help lower-income seniors avoid higher property taxes and remain in their homes, two existing State programs are being expanded:

1. **The Property Tax Fairness Credit**, which currently allows eligible Mainers to take a \$1,500 credit, has increased to \$2,000; **Note:** This program is not administered by the City of Belfast. To claim the credit, you must file Form 1040ME and Schedule PTFC/STFC for the tax year during which the property tax or rent was paid. For help, call 207-624-9784. For more info, please visit: <https://www.maine.gov/revenue/taxes/tax-relief-credits-programs/income-tax-credits/property-tax-fairness-credit>
2. **The State Property Tax Deferral Program**, a loan program that covers the annual property tax bills of Maine seniors age 65 and older who cannot afford to pay them on their own, has been expanded. It doubles the income limit on that program to \$80,000 and also raises asset limits. Taxes must be paid back when the home is sold or becomes part of an estate. **Note:** This program is not administered by the City of Belfast. Questions on this State managed program can be referred to Maine Revenue Services, Property Tax Division, at 207-624-5600 or [prop.tax@maine.gov](mailto:prop.tax@maine.gov). For more info, please visit: [www.maine.gov/revenue/taxes/tax-relief-credits-programs/property-tax-relief-programs/deferral-program](https://www.maine.gov/revenue/taxes/tax-relief-credits-programs/property-tax-relief-programs/deferral-program)