

Last Friday afternoon, Maine Governor Paul R. LePage issued a proclamation calling the 128th Maine Legislature to return for a special session on the 23rd of October. A late-October special session has been expected for some time, as the Legislature has several items requiring actions before next January's 2nd Regular Session.

These include LR 2395, a cannabis legalization omnibus bill reported out by the Joint Select Committee on Marijuana Legalization Implementation last Thursday.

Governor LePage also cited the need for a special session in order to tinker with a "food sovereignty" bill passed earlier in the year. The new law will ease commerce between Maine-based producers of food and local consumers but drew the attention of federal regulators, who deemed its provisions too lax in the area of poultry production. Threatened by a federal intervention of poultry regulation in Maine, Governor LePage, bill sponsor Sen. Troy Jackson of Allagash, and longtime food sovereignty activist Rep. Craig Hickman of Winthrop are joining to address the problematic language in the bill. Amending the law is meant to save it and is not expected to be contentious.

In addition, an oversight in budget appropriations during the spring unintentionally left the Maine Office of Geographic Information Systems without funding and will be addressed during the special session.

There are several other issues that could potentially be addressed by the Legislature or highlighted by the Governor during the special session, including the future of ranked-choice voting. The session's focus and length will become clearer during the next few weeks in the lead up to October 23.

Preti Flaherty will be on the trail for the newest and most accurate information possible as it becomes available.