

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Right to Know Advisory Committee will hold a public hearing at the following time and place:

September 14, 2016, 1:00 pm
Room 228, State House
Augusta, ME 04333

The purpose of the hearing is to take comments and suggestions about how the Freedom of Access Act is working and how it might be improved, consistent with its goals of giving citizens adequate access to records and meetings of decision making bodies of government.

Maine's Right to Know Advisory Committee serves as a resource for ensuring compliance with the law and responsibility for a broad range of activities to advance the purposes and principles underlying Maine's Freedom of Access Act. The Freedom of Access Act, which can be found at Title 1, chapter 13 of the Maine Revised Statutes, states the Legislature's intent that public proceedings exist to aid in the conduct of the people's business, that government actions be taken openly, and that the records of government actions be open to public inspection and deliberations be conducted openly. The law provides the public with the right to inspect and copy public records and imposes requirements on government bodies who have received such a request, as well as requiring that bodies of government conduct their meetings in public. The law also provides specific exceptions that allow State and local government bodies to keep certain records or information confidential, or to have executive sessions that are not open to the public during meetings that are otherwise public.

The Advisory Committee requests testimony on the following topic:

Considering the sensitive nature of certain information held by government entities, how could public access to government meetings and records be improved?

Written comments may be submitted to:

Donna Hurley
Office of Policy and Legal Analysis
Cross Office Building, Room 215
13 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333
Donna.hurley@legislature.maine.gov

If you plan to testify at the public hearing or to submit comments, the Right to Know Advisory Committee requests that your testimony or comments relate to the following general questions:

- How did you learn about the rights provided in the Freedom of Access Act?
- Did you have questions about how to make a request for a public record, and if so, how did you get answers to them?
- What were you surprised to learn when you made a request for a public record?
- If an issue arose that affected your ability to obtain a public record, how did you attempt to resolve that issue?
- If you are a member of a government body, how does your understanding of the requirements of the Freedom of Access Act differ from the expectations of those making public records requests?
- If you are a member of a government body, do the requirements of the Freedom of Access Act allow you to accomplish your government duties and comply with existing public access requirements and procedures?

This hearing is not a forum for the resolution of specific complaints about meetings or records. The Right to Know Advisory Committee asks that your testimony and comments do not question the motives of others or seek resolution of a particular dispute. Depending upon attendance, the Advisory Committee may limit testimony to a certain duration.