

Massachusetts House of Representatives Bill Summary

Bill #: H.2271

Title: An Act relative to non-criminal dispositions of municipal bylaws and acts of nature

Sponsor: Rep. William Galvin (by request)

Committee: Municipalities and Regional Government

Hearing Date: June 24, 2025

Current Law: Section 21 of MGL Chapter 40, which governs the purpose for which towns may enact bylaws, states that towns may, for the purposes hereinafter named, make such ordinances and by-laws, not repugnant to law, as they may judge most conducive to their welfare, which shall be binding upon all inhabitants thereof and all persons within their limits. They may, except as herein provided, affix penalties for breaches thereof not exceeding three hundred dollars for each offense. It then lists 24 subjects or categories of bylaws.

Section 21D of said Chapter 40 regulates the enforcement of non-criminal disposition of ordinance, by-laws, rule or regulation violations.

Summary: Section 1 of the bill increases the maximum fine for penalizing non-criminal violations from \$300 to \$1,000 per violation.

Section 2 adds a clause to the list of ordinances or bylaws that may be enacted by a town, for preventing damage from the falling of unhealthy, damaged, dying, hazardous or neglected trees. Penalties for violating such ordinances or bylaws would be assessed on the owner of the property where the tree was located, or to the agent responsible for maintaining the property. The money paid for such violations would be used to compensate the person aggrieved by the violation, or to the municipality if there was no person impacted by the violation.

Section 3 amends Section 21D by increasing the maximum fine which may be imposed for each such violation from \$300 to \$1,000.