

Testimony in Support of LD 1679

An Act To Establish the Maine Climate Change Council To Assist Maine To Mitigate, Prepare for and Adapt to Climate Change

Environment & Natural Resources Committee

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From:

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Chairman Carson, Chairman Tucker, and Members of the Committee, my name is Rozanna Patane. I chair the Energy Steering Committee (ESC) for the Town of York, but I'm here today as an individual. My background is in finance and planning and I have a special interest in zero-carbon affordable co-housing as a model of how intentional communities can reduce carbon and address critical housing needs at the same time. I'm a constituent of Senator Lawrence and Representative Blume. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 1679.

The Governor and this Legislature have already lifted the cloud of gloom over our state in relation to the coming climate crisis with actions both concrete and symbolic. And you're managing to do it in a bipartisan way. That's how I remember the Maine of my childhood, but it's still remarkable in today's environment. Thank you.

This bill makes it official – the work that towns and cities like York have been doing would be part of an overarching state framework. Simply *having*

state goals and priorities is a mandate for setting our own local goals in concert. Access to the State's resources advances our own planning.

The working groups are key so I want to share some perspective from a town's eye view.

I hope that the working groups keep in mind the needs of the municipalities as they deliberate. Much of the change will happen at the local level where resources are limited. How policies, ordinances, standards and programs make it easier or more difficult for towns to take action can be pivotal in how well they work, and should be part of each working group's considerations. I encourage each working group to consider how the State can lend assistance – technical and financial – to municipalities and small private initiatives that are innovative and promising but under-resourced.

I hope the working groups do not become silos, that there is a structure to integrate strategies and programs across the topical groups and also relate to other State priorities.

One example is the co-housing model I mentioned earlier. This is an innovative solution at the juncture of several of Maine's most critical challenges: Carbon reduction, affordable homes, attracting young families to Maine, sustainable and equitable economic systems and jobs, and equity in access to climate change solutions. This is a challenge that doesn't live in just one of the topical areas identified in LD 1679.

The great potential in a multi-generational, net-zero affordable co-housing community is as a model that could be replicated by communities across

the state. It's complex and unconventional, so making it scalable requires supporting policies and programs and a toolkit approach.

It would require us to consider strategies that cross the lines of the working groups in this bill and even beyond. How can our climate action plan facilitate and provide incentives for such innovative approaches?

I hope this bill's planning process provides for such an approach and facilitates local communities' efforts.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Rozanna Patane