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**Testimony in Opposition to LD 2102
February 20, 2024**

Sen. Nangle, Rep. Stover, and distinguished members of the Committee on State and Local Government, I am Rep. Amy Arata and I represent House District 104, which includes New Gloucester and part of Gray.

I oppose ***LD 2102 - An Act to Support Municipalities by Repealing the Law Limiting the Municipal Property Tax Levy*** because I believe those of us who serve in government should keep our promises. When opposing parties mutually negotiate a legislative compromise, that agreement should be honored. In 2005, the Maine people expressed frustration that the escalating rate of tax increases at the state and local level were unsustainable. A bipartisan working group was established to address the public's concern.

After dozens of subsequent meetings, the working group presented LD 1, which included many compromises to accomplish the shared goals of providing an efficient and affordable government for the Maine people. One of the pillars of this compromise was the implementation of a property tax levy limit. This measure was supported by then-Representative Troy Jackson, Sen. Rotundo, and then-Representative Janet T. Mills.

As former Chairman of the New Gloucester Budget Committee, I understand the difficulty of balancing complex municipal budgets. It's challenging to represent the views of the public without a level of engagement built into the system. Local public officials have a responsibility to create budgets within the limits provided by the voters. If they are unable to do so, they owe a clear explanation to their voters. Voters have the right to compel their municipality to honor the property tax levy limit. Passage of LD 2102 would strip away this important right and limit the voices of our voters. Unfortunately, even more, the passage of this bill will create more mistrust of our public officials.

Thank you and I'm happy to answer questions.