



227 Water Street, Suite 208
Augusta, ME 04330
207-250-0220
www.growsmartmaine.org

**2023
Board of Directors**

Rebecca Casey
Chair

Ethan Boxer-Macomber
Vice-Chair

Jean Claveau
Treasurer

Maggie Fleming
Secretary

Kirsten Brewer
Jon Boyton
Elizabeth Frazier
Philip Hussey
Jeff Levine
Zoe Miller
Carol Morris
Lynne Seeley
Ben Smith
Sally Stockwell
Galen Weibley

Mark C. Wiesendanger
MaineHousing
Ex-officio
Rhiannon Hampson
USDA: Rural Development
Ex-officio

Daniel Hildreth
Emeritus
Evan Richert
Emeritus
Anna Marie Thron
Emeritus

**Testimony of Nancy Smith, Executive Director of GrowSmart Maine
in support of LD 1274 “An Act To Increase Land Access For Historically
Disadvantaged Populations”**

April 3, 2023

Senator Dill, Representative O’Neil, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry,

My name is Nancy Smith, I live in Ellsworth, and I am the CEO of GrowSmart Maine. We are a statewide non-partisan non-profit organization helping communities navigate change in alignment with smart growth. We advocate for comprehensive policies and funding for smart growth practices and outcomes.

I regret that I am unable to present this testimony in person, having served two terms on this important committee while working every day as co-owner of a diversified dairy farm.

GrowSmart Maine has partnered with Build Maine to guide a transparent crowd-sourcing of policy proposals that began a year ago, and has drawn together over a hundred people from across Maine and beyond. [Policy Action 2023](#) has resulted in sixteen proposals from eight working groups, all addressing this goal, “to address barriers to and create incentives for equitable, sustainable growth and development that strengthens downtowns and villages of all sizes while pulling development pressure away from productive and open natural areas. We do so acknowledging that Maine has urban, rural, and suburban settings for which any solution may/not be a fit and a variety of people who deserve to be welcomed to their communities.” I’ve attached an information sheet for your review.

While this bill is not a part of that process, it addresses the goal of pulling development away from farmland by supporting productive use of this land, and restoring equity to Maine’s development and farmland protection efforts. By pairing access to farmland through agricultural land grants of up to 100 acres with programming to support socially disadvantaged groups with academic, vocational and social skills necessary to pursue long-term and productive careers in agriculture through apprenticeship, LD 1274 provides resources for long term success for populations long denied fair and equal access to either land or professional development resources. They have not been in a position to take over a family farm or learn from relatives the way many Maine farmers have. These investments will serve all of us well, as we need more people dedicated to food and fiber production across the state. GrowSmart Maine will assist the committee in any way that is helpful.

Build Maine + GrowSmart Maine

POLICY ACTION 2023

Overview of Proposed Legislation

a collaboration between



GrowSmart Maine



PROBLEM STATEMENT Maine's current uncoordinated approach to building places is causing real, unintended, and significant social, environmental, financial, economic, and cultural challenges and requires the creation of a cohesive approach to land development, redevelopment, and placemaking.

THE GOAL of Policy Action 2023 is to address barriers to and create incentives for equitable, sustainable growth and development that strengthens downtowns and villages of all sizes while pulling development pressure away from productive and open natural areas. We do so acknowledging that Maine has urban, rural, and suburban settings for which any solution may/not be a fit and a variety of people who deserve to be welcomed to their communities.

FOR TALKING POINTS AND MORE: [Public Folder for PA23](#)

Policy Action 2023				
Working Group	Bill Number	Bill Title	Sponsor	Committee
Printed Bills (LDs):				
1: Coordination of Government	LD 602	An Act to Provide Regional Support to Deliver State and Federal Programs to Cities and Towns in the State	Representative Traci Gere	Select on Housing
1: Coordination of Government	LD 250	Resolve, to Prepare Preapproved Building Types	Senator Matt Pouliot	Select on Housing
3: Complete Streets Action	LD 1076	"An Act to Expand the Use of Traffic Cameras for School and Work Zones"	Senator Mattie Daughtry	Transportation Public Hearing April 4th
6: Subdivision Regulations	LD 1257	An Act to Increase Housing and Protect the Regional Road Network, Municipal Tax Base, and Working Lands	Representative Lydia Crafts	Select on Housing
7: Downtown Revitalization / Open Space protection	LD 638	NOTE: Sponsor has decided to withdraw the bill and create a stakeholder group to meet between sessions. Goal is property tax policies to incentivize redevelopment of derelict buildings.	Representative Marc Malon	Select on Housing
8: Decarbonization of Buildings	LD 1101	An Act to Support Lower Home Energy Costs by Establishing a Home Energy Scoring System	Representative Rebecca Millett	Energy, Utilities and Technology Public Hearing March 30th
Pending Bills (LRs):				
1: Coordination of Government	LR 1771	An Act to Establish an Affordable Housing Permitting Process	Representative Traci Gere	
2: Rework Transportation Funding	LR 1777	An Act to Strategically Advance the State's Public Transit Infrastructure by Reinvigorating the Public Transit Advisory Council and Increasing Funding	Representative Maggie O'Neil	Transportation
3: Complete Streets Action	LR 1782	An Act to Establish a Thriving Corridors Program by Encouraging Affordable Housing and Mixed-use Development	Representative Traci Gere	Transportation
3: Complete Streets Action	LR 1256	Resolve to Establish a Vision Zero Task Force to Recommend Strategies to Achieve the Goal of Eliminating Traffic Fatalities and Serious Injuries	Representative Dan Ankeles	Transportation
3: Complete Streets Action	LR 2226	An Act to Grant Municipalities the Authority to Set Lower Motor Vehicle Speed Limits	Senator Rick Bennett	Transportation
3: Complete Streets Action	LR 996	An Act to Increase Street Safety	Representative Marc Malon	Transportation
4: Growth Management Law	LR 1377	An Act to Update the Growth Management Law	Representative Melanie Sachs	
5: State Historic Rehab Tax Credit	LR 1684	An Act to Expand the Maine Historic Rehabilitation Credit	Representative Maureen Terry	Taxation
6: Subdivision Regulations	LR 275	Resolve Directing the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to convene a stakeholder group tasked with a Comprehensive overhaul and modernization of the State Subdivision Statutes	Representative Jack Ducharme	
7: Downtown Revitalization / Open Space protection	LR 1399	An Act To Increase Maine's Housing Supply, Combat Climate Change, and Preserve Rural Open Spaces by Prohibiting Communities from Large Lot Zoning Practices in Areas Where Public Sewer and Water Infrastructure are Available	Representative Jim Boyle	

For an overview of Policy Action 2023, visit [GrowSmart Maine website > Public Policy](#) or [click this link](#)