



City of Auburn, Maine

Mayor Jason J. Levesque

60 Court Street | Auburn, Maine 04210

www.auburnmaine.gov | 207.333.6601

April 10, 2023

Testimony: LD 214, 1154, 665

Dear Chairwomen Senator Pierce and Representative Gere and members of the Maine Legislative Commission on Housing,

As one of Maine's largest Cities, a service center, and a leader in the construction of housing I would like to share my thoughts on LD 214, 1154 and 665. All three of which are designed to limit the impact of LD 2003.

For the last 5 years Auburn has recognized how exclusionary and prescriptive municipal zoning has led to our current housing crisis by minimizing the ability of land owners to create different types of housing options on their land. From ADU's to missing middle housing units (2 to 4 units), all of which are in critical need throughout the state. Regardless of the size of the community, the common need for housing tailored to seniors, to our younger generation just entering the workforce is great and equally recognized.

The legislation introduced to either delay or remove key elements prior to the implementation of LD 2003 on July 1 2023 is understandable, but shortsighted. I can state that any delay will only exacerbate the current housing crisis by preventing individual land owners from being part of the solution by creating new housing stock and allow smaller municipalities from contributing to the solutions we desperately need.

The idea that more time is needed at the municipal level to implement the prescribed changes only applies to those communities that have deprioritized the work in hope that future legislation action would allow them not to do the work that is critically important to ensure that the private sector produces the varied housing that is needed throughout our state, regardless of the size of the community. As a community that has already done what is required (or well on its way) It is disingenuous to assume that more time is needed.

To assume that LD 2003 infringes on home rule only applies to local ordinances which takes away the individual's right to develop their land in a way in which doesn't contradict their neighbors use. In other words if someone wants to build housing in an area that is predominantly housing, then that is a complimentary use, not a conflicting use. To assume that renters are less of a residential use than owner occupied units is repulsive. People are people and their needs and desires for housing trumps their neighbors vision of aesthetics on land they do not own.

Furthermore, to create two classes of municipalities based on an arbitrary population number further illustrates the 'two Maine' concepts, rural and urban. Where the urban areas shoulder the responsibility and cost needed to be service center, but also a housing center. It's in the States best interest to enact legislation that will be fairly applied to all, not just a select few.

I respectfully ask that LD 214, 1154, and 665 not receive a favorable recommendation from this committee.

Best regards,

Jason Levesque
Mayor, City of Auburn

Jason Levesque
City of Auburn
LD 214

Please include this testimony for LD 214, LD 1154, and LD 665