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**Testimony of Nancy Smith, Executive Director of GrowSmart Maine  
in support of LD 596, An Act to Exempt Certain Conservation Lots from  
Municipal Subdivision Review**

Apr 12, 2023

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

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.

Our support for this bill is grounded in the fact that sound development practices support thriving growth areas and natural and working lands in every Maine community. Municipal subdivision rules constitute sound land use planning in outlining a process for local stakeholders to consider short and long term implications for subdividing a parcel of land for development. LD 596 exempts from subdivision rules those instances where subdivision regulations would be triggered by the protection of working and open space. This makes perfect sense as these uses support community goals without creating challenges related to development, for which the subdivision review process was created.

Working farmland and forests, as well as open and recreational lands offer benefits including economic stability, climate resilience, fiscal health, and personal wellness. This bill streamlines the process for willing landowners to protect lands for these purposes.

GrowSmart Maine will assist the committee in any way that is helpful.