



City of Presque Isle, Maine

The Office of the Director for Economic & Community Development

Galen L. Weibley

Email: gweibley@presqueisleme.us

April 25, 2023

RE: LD 1593 An Act to Increase Affordable Housing Development

To Members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing:

Thank you for your service in representing the communities of Maine in Augusta. I am writing to express my concerns with LD 1593, an act to increase affordable housing development in Maine.

Presque Isle has taken proactive steps to encourage housing of all types including affordable housing within the city limits. In fact, we have two affordable housing projects which once constructed will increase affordable housing by 31 new units for Aroostook County. Two other developments currently under review are ways the city is working to increase housing locally.

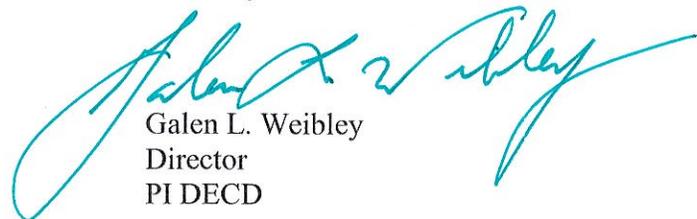
In reading the bill language, I am concerned with proposed section 4352-A "Residential Housing" which if approved will preempt home rule by not allowing municipalities to adopt or enforce zoning restrictions of residential housing in any district. While the intent is understood from the sponsor, this proposal in reality will cause irreparable harm to marginalized and low-income communities who historically have been placed in or near industrial parks for their low costs.

Under current Presque Isle zoning, no residential development is allowed in the Industrial Zone and for good reason. Many uses within this zone are not compatible for residential neighborhoods including noise, commercial vehicles, air traffic and the use of chemicals which can cause harm to families living within this zone.

Presque Isle has prevented considerable damage to public health and wellness of individuals and families by prohibiting residential growth within this area. I implore the committee to consider the ramifications this change will cause low-income and marginalized communities who need access to safe, affordable housing with dignity.

Thank you in advance for your thoughtful consideration regarding my testimony. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions or require more information during deliberation.

Sincerely,



Galen L. Weibley
Director
PI DECD

Galen Weibley
City of Presque Isle
LD 1593

Attached is my letter outlining concerns with proposed bill language which may have repercussions for marginalized communities in allowing housing in industrial areas.