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Testimony in Support of LD 1752-Resolve, to Prepare Preapproved Building Types

Joint Select Committee on Housing
May 9, 2023

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere and members of the Committee on Housing,

My name is Eamonn Dundon, and I am the Director of Advocacy of the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce. We represent 1,300 businesses in our region who employ over 65,000 Mainers. We are submitting this testimony today to express our organization's support for LD 1752.

We understand that Maine's housing supply crisis requires a multifaceted approach that involves a broad range of strategies. While no single solution will be sufficient to address the problem, we believe that LD 1752 is one of the moderate-impact proposals that can help unleash production and create more housing opportunities for Mainers. By decreasing the cost of housing production and reducing the political backlash that has hindered progress in many communities, this legislation has the potential to make a real difference.

While the process to establish preapproved building types will occur at a later date, we believe that the City of South Bend, Indiana offers a model that Maine can look to¹. The preapproved building types established by South Bend range from single-family homes designed to fit on small infill lots, to duplexes and small apartment buildings. These plans are in keeping with the development patterns of municipalities in our state, and they have strong historical precedent, including Sears' model home kits that can be found in communities around Maine.

If done right, preapproved building types can unlock much of the production legalized in LD 2003, particularly for small scale and owner-occupant developers. In conversations and public meetings with residents all over our region, we have found that this type of moderate-density infill development is what people most want to see in their communities. However, it's exactly this type of development that is hardest to build due to entitlement, design, and construction costs and a smaller unit count over which to spread those often prohibitively high "soft costs". By allowing for these pre-approved building types in municipally designated growth areas, we can significantly reduce these costs and make real housing opportunities possible for Maine families who are, for the most part, not experienced and sophisticated developers, but instead committed community members who want to do their part to expand housing opportunities while also building equity in their communities.

We do have one small suggestion, and that is to specify in this resolve that the catalog of pre-approved building types should include a mix of unit compositions, from small infill single family development up to duplexes, triplexes, and small apartment buildings. It is only with this range of typologies that we can fully realize the multifaceted approaches necessary for expanding supply in a contextually appropriate manner in Maine communities.

In conclusion, we want to thank you for your time and commitment to all Mainers. We believe that LD 1752 is an important step forward in addresses Maine's housing supply crisis, and we ask for your expeditious approval of this important legislation.

¹ [South Bend Preapproved Building Types](#)