



LD 1752, Resolve, to Prepare Preapproved Building Types

Testimony in Support

May 9, 2023

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and Honorable Members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing,

My name is Elizabeth Frazier, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of the Maine Real Estate & Development Association in support of LD 1752, Resolve, to Prepare Preapproved Building Types.

MEREDA is a statewide, membership-based organization founded in 1985, whose members include real estate owners, for—profit and non—profit developers, bankers, property managers and other related professionals who are committed to supporting responsible development and real estate ownership throughout Maine. Through the work of its Public Policy Committee, MEREDA pursues a more fair, predictable, and practical policy environment.

LD 1752 would direct the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry (DACF) to adopt preapproved building types that can be used to streamline the construction of new housing units in Maine. The intent of this resolve is to create a dialogue between DACF, planners, and housing creators, to expedite the construction of new dwelling units across the state.

LD 1752 would take into consideration the things that govern how a housing unit gets built – local land use, statewide land use, and the current Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC) and National Fire Protection Association Life Safety Code. Bringing these parties together will to create template designs for building projects will help jump-start small and community housing creation in Maine.

The expense of developing a project is often not just in the cost of land but in the time and actual dollars spent on planning, architectural and environmental design, and permit approval processes that can take years to finalize. This high expense is a barrier to housing creation and inadvertently creates a system whereby only those with deep pockets can afford to building housing – they can afford the high risk/high reward proposition.

For most housing creators, there is no special financing available for development costs, and certainly not in the costs of defending and working toward a permit approval. These added costs, without any financing or support mechanism, can prevent new or small-sized housing creators from using innovative solutions to provide housing in their communities. We think LD 1752 is a step in the right direction, and we look forward to continued collaboration to break down barriers to housing creation and prevent a playing field where the only ones who can afford to participate are those who can afford a high-risk/high-reward proposition. Please vote Ought to Pass on LD 1752.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth M. Frazier, On Behalf of the Maine Real Estate & Development Association