



*131st Legislature
Joint Select Committee on Housing*

Testimony of Laura Mitchell, Executive Director of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition

May 12, 2023

In favor of 1673 -An Act To Encourage Affordable Housing And Mixed-Use Development By Establishing A Thriving Corridors Program sponsored by Representative Traci Gere

Hello Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and esteemed members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing, my name is Laura Mitchell, I serve as the Executive Director of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition.

The Maine Affordable Housing Coalition (MAHC) is a nonprofit membership organization of more than 140 Maine housing development, architecture, construction, design, engineering, shelter, and housing services organizations. We work to address Maine's housing crisis by advocating for the creation and preservation of housing for all people in Maine.

MAHC is sharing this testimony today in favor of LD 1673, a An Act To Encourage Affordable Housing And Mixed-Use Development By Establishing A Thriving Corridors Program that is sponsored by Representative Traci Gere.

This bill establishes a program to assist municipalities in redeveloping high-impact corridors proximate to downtowns or village centers into mixed-use, mixed-income, walkable neighborhoods by enabling significant infill and redevelopment of underutilized land into housing and more. This is just the type of equitable development needed for affordable housing in Maine.

Maine is in a housing crisis and demand outstrips supply. MAHC supports LD 1673 because it encourages economical housing development by focusing it in areas that already have infrastructure (sewer, water, roads), and don't encroach on natural resources. Further, this bill unlocks wealth in Maine by adding new buildings to support the municipal tax base in areas that often see significant retail turnover. and that are largely underutilized with large parking lots or empty, unusually sized spaces. Housing, rather than commercial, needs to be prioritized as the highest and best use of land in Maine towns when it is built in already developed, high density, walkable areas.

All Maine towns are impacted by the state's housing crisis. Towns need to have more tools and policies to address housing needs. This proposal will unlock significant development potential in communities of all sizes across Maine. High impact corridors exist from Caribou, to South Paris, to Bangor. LD 1673 can be an efficient way to create significant economic activity throughout the state.

LD 1673 is a long-term strategy that should be a part of Maine's comprehensive approach to ensuring all Maine people have a home.

Laura Mitchell
Maine Affordable Housing Coalition
LD 1673

131st Legislature Joint Select Committee on Housing
Testimony of Laura Mitchell, Executive Director of the Maine Affordable Housing
Coalition on May 12, 2023

In favor of 1673 -An Act To Encourage Affordable Housing And Mixed-Use
Development By Establishing A Thriving Corridors Program sponsored by
Representative Traci Gere

Hello Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and esteemed members of the Joint Select
Committee on Housing, my name is Laura Mitchell, I serve as the Executive Director
of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition.

The Maine Affordable Housing Coalition (MAHC) is a nonprofit membership
organization of more than 140 Maine housing development, architecture,
construction, design, engineering, shelter, and housing services organizations. We
work to address Maine's housing crisis by advocating for the creation and
preservation of housing for all people in Maine.

MAHC is sharing this testimony today in favor of LD 1673, a An Act To Encourage
Affordable Housing And Mixed-Use Development By Establishing A Thriving
Corridors Program that is sponsored by Representative Traci Gere.

This bill establishes a program to assist municipalities in redeveloping high-impact
corridors proximate to downtowns or village centers into mixed-use, mixed-income,
walkable neighborhoods by enabling significant infill and redevelopment of
underutilized land into housing and more. This is just the type of equitable
development needed for affordable housing in Maine.

Maine is in a housing crisis and demand outstrips supply. MAHC supports LD 1673
because it encourages economical housing development by focusing it in areas that
already have infrastructure (sewer, water, roads), and don't encroach on natural
resources. Further, this bill unlocks wealth in Maine by adding new buildings to
support the municipal tax base in areas that often see significant retail turnover. and
that are largely underutilized with large parking lots or empty, unusually sized spaces.
Housing, rather than commercial, needs to be prioritized as the highest and best use of
land in Maine towns when it is built in already developed, high density, walkable
areas.

All Maine towns are impacted by the state's housing crisis. Towns need to have more
tools and policies to address housing needs. This proposal will unlock significant
development potential in communities of all sizes across Maine. High impact
corridors exist from Caribou, to South Paris, to Bangor. LD 1673 can be an efficient
way to create significant economic activity throughout the state.

LD 1673 is a long-term strategy that should be a part of Maine's comprehensive
approach to ensuring all Maine people have a home.