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**Testimony of Nancy Smith, CEO of GrowSmart Maine
In Support of LD 1739 An Act to Extend Development District Tax
Increment Financing Districts**

May 10, 2023

Senator Grohowski, Representative Perry and Honorable Members of the Joint Select Committee on Taxation,

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.

Tax Increment Financing (TIFs) are one of a very few economic development tools available to municipalities, and when used effectively, they foster investments that make sense for residents, the municipality, and even the region. The use of TIFs is voluntary for municipalities, and GrowSmart Maine encourages their use for smart growth outcomes.

LD 1739 provides a strategy for municipalities to lengthen the term of a TIF district to support development of affordable housing and transit-oriented development in areas they have identified as suitable, and where such investments meet the long term goals of the community. Development of affordable housing and transit-oriented development are robust economic development strategies.

The need for affordable housing is well known to this committee, and to the full Legislature. Transit-oriented development is equally valuable, because with it, the need for owning a vehicle, or sometimes more than one vehicle, is removed. This lowers the overall household cost of living, which, when coupled with development of affordable housing as described in this bill, will strengthen a community now and into the future.

We are happy to assist in any way that is helpful to the committee.