

February 7, 2024

Testimony of Rep. Poppy Arford in support of
**LD 2162, An Act Regarding the Homestead Property Tax Exemption and the
Property Value Reassessment Process**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation

Honorable Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation, my name is Poppy Arford and I proudly represent State House District 101 the western part of Brunswick.

People who live, work, raise their families and aspire to be homeowners in Maine have been challenged for a number of years by escalating home prices. In Brunswick the average home value is \$451,935, representing a 10.5%, one year increase as of December 31, 2023. I think it is safe to say that statewide, as well as in Brunswick, we are experiencing an affordable housing crisis. **LD 2162, An Act Regarding the Homestead Property Tax Exemption and the Property Value Reassessment Process**, will address the crisis and act to prevent homelessness by providing for an additional homestead property tax exemption (HPTE) of \$15,000 for homes with assessed values of less than \$100,000.

In Brunswick, of the 7,898 homes town wide 1,266 are currently valued at under \$100,000. This bill will reduce the property tax assessment of these homes by allowing for an additional \$15,000 HPTE. Of the 1,266 homes valued under \$100,000 approximately 98% or 1,240 are mobile homes.

In my District, the 70-year-old Linnhaven Park, which offers lots for 300 mobile homes, was recently placed on the market with a \$27 million price tag. It does not take a rocket scientist to do the math and conclude that once sold the current \$450 - \$550 lot fee rates will go up – for many, past the point of affordability. As a result, the town of Brunswick may lose up to 300 stable, safe, affordable housing homes in the near future. This bill will not ensure the affordability of these homes, yet it will serve to save every Linnhaven resident whose home is valued at less than \$100,000 the property tax they would otherwise pay on \$15,000 of their home value.

In closing, I have read the LD 2162 working waterfront component testimony posted online. It is excellent. I agree that Maine people will benefit by the protection of this heritage industry with protective tax policy and strongly support this component of the bill as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration of LD 2162. I urge your positive vote on this bill.

Rep. Poppy Arford
Brunswick
LD 2162