

To the members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee, I thank you for taking the time to consider this testimony.

I am Don McCann and I reside in Bangor, Maine. I would like to explain why this bill is so important to me and to the State of Maine and why I hope this passes.

This bill is an incremental step towards land conservation and affordable housing and it also serves to possibly protect the smaller, rural municipalities from sprawling developments that can waste farmland and valuable resources.

Without the passing of this bill, towns and cities who are struggling to find areas to create more housing that this state needs, are more likely to allow the traditional sprawl developments that have shaped Maine's development pattern into rural communities as we see occurring time and time again.

This bill is an excellent tool to allow owners/developers to have an opportunity to shape their own parking needs. By allowing developers to build more units on the same land by using the space currently being used by parking spaces.

As a member of Strong Towns I was encouraged to go out in my city, Bangor, on Black Friday, which is supposedly the busiest shopping day of the year, and take pictures of all the unused parking spaces and even lots that are wasting the spaces of our towns. The results were alarming. Huge sprawling lots left half empty and some where only a few cars were parked in an enormous lot. This is a tremendous waste of land and quite honestly could be much more productive for any developer or municipality who, because of parking mandates, could not build a housing unit or mixed use development on a smaller site because of the lack of parking space. These mandates were originally used as a tool to make sure developers had enough spaces for their peak hours at their establishment but as we can plainly see everyday with how many spaces get used, this policy is extremely outdated.

Homeowners who wish to add an in-law apartment or ADU but could not previously, because of the lack of space due to parking minimums, could now do so with the passing of this bill. The more productive our town and city lands are, by using infill development that could be accomplished by the passing of this bill, in the most efficient and productive way possible, the less likely we need to raise taxes on homeowners and small businesses to cover any municipal

and State shortfalls that we may incur and may also actually drastically reduce the cost of housing.

In short, this bill passing can accomplish so much towards creating new housing in all the right places to not only foster a sense of community but to help our municipalities thrive as well.

Just the simple fact that the passing of this bill doesn't make parking illegal, it doesn't drastically alter our Maine way of life or take away anyone's right to own or store a vehicle all while making it a big possibility to change outdated rules to make living here better for everyone from the person looking for an affordable place to live to a person wanting to start their own business or ones who cannot drive and relies on transit, to the big box store developers paying and using far more land than they actually need, should be reason to pass it.

This one simple change has the ability to benefit the financial health of local governments, knock another barrier down for the entrepreneur, create affordability of urban and rural housing, and aid in efforts to combat climate change and manage stormwater more effectively. The passing of this bill also has obvious appeal to those who simply don't want governments to tell people what to do with their private property.

I truly believe this one bill could be the start of something profoundly great for Maine and everyone who lives and visits here.

I thank you again for your time and consideration of this matter.

Don McCann  
Bangor, Maine