



CITY OF BANGOR

Committee on Housing and Economic Development

Testimony neither for nor against LD 427 – “An Act to Prohibit Mandatory Parking Space Minimums in State and Municipal Building Codes”

March 6, 2025

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and distinguished members of the Committee on Housing and Economic Development, my name is Debbie Laurie and I am the City Manager of Bangor. I am providing testimony today regarding LD 427, An Act to Prohibit Mandatory Parking Space Minimums in State and Municipal Building Codes.

We acknowledge that overbuilt parking impacts communities. Space taken up by parking could instead be housing, forest, shops, gardens, or anything else that positively contributes to the experience of the neighborhoods, towns, and cities in which they occur. Parking minimums contribute to the cost of development and yield impervious surfaces that increase stormwater and flooding impacts during precipitation events.

LD 427 would prohibit Bangor, other municipalities and the State from imposing minimum parking requirements for a new development, land use or occupancy of land or a building, but would allow each to make recommendations as to the minimum amount of parking. Municipal leaders are the legislative body with the greatest insight into the unique needs of each type of development within their community and take their responsibility to develop appropriate land use requirements, including parking minimums, very seriously.

As written it would apply to all developments, which could result in unintended consequences detrimental to the safety, well-being and health of our respective communities. The City of Bangor continues to take a measured approach to reducing parking standards based on objective criteria tied to underlying use, such as reducing parking minimums to one space per unit or less depending on the housing development, and granting authority to our Planning Board to waive parking minimums for any development requiring a land development permit. Creating a prohibition with recommendations could be counterproductive to our shared desire for economic growth in our communities.

The City of Bangor believes in standardization of building standards but values our ability to operate under home rule. This bill as currently printed would remove our ability to implement Ordinances that are reflective of our community's collective will, could result in unexpected impacts, and create ambiguity as to how recommendations are enforced. We are wholly supportive of reducing barriers to development, but we want to be thoughtful, conscientious and reflective in our approach to meet the needs of our City.

Thank you for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to reach out with questions.

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