

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO LD 870  
SUBMITTED BY THE AROOSTOOK COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS

Dear Senator Talbot-Ross; Representative Pluecker & Honorable Members of the Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry Committee:

On behalf of the Aroostook County Board of Commissioners, we write today in strong opposition to LD 870, "An Act Regarding the Membership of the Maine Land Use Planning Commission."

First and foremost it is alarming that this bill expands the size of the LUPC from its current 9 members to 13 and all four of those appointments are political appointees of the Governor.

The proposed bill also strips all requirements that LUPC Commissioners have any working knowledge of the unorganized territories or that members need to live or work in areas where the LUPC has jurisdiction such as plantations and unincorporated townships. This is a dangerous precedent to be setting and would be similar to telling the City of Augusta that members of their own planning board can reside in Waterville, Readfield or Carthage.

Decisions regarding policy, land use, zoning and code enforcement should be vested with people directly

affected by those decisions, not political and partisan appointees in Augusta.

We also have concerns about the proposed reduction of time given to County Commissioners to name appointees that represent Maine counties with unorganized territories. Currently, County Commissioners have 90 days to complete that process and this bill would reduce that time to 30 days. Current law requires counties to interview and nominate LUPC commissioners in the same manner as they do when hiring employees.

In Aroostook County we take that very seriously given the fact that we have over 100 unorganized townships and 9 plantations that rely on the LUPC. 30 days is simply not enough time to properly advertise a vacancy, schedule interviews with candidates and schedule the public meeting that a person would be named for appointment.

In short, LD 870 is poor public policy and should not be given further consideration. We ask this committee to strongly reject LD 870 with a unanimous ought not to pass recommendation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Aroostook Board of County Commissioners

*Chair Paul J. Underwood – Presque Isle*

*William T. Dobbins - Houlton*

*Daniel V. Deveau - Cyr Plantation*