



## CITY OF BANGOR

### Committee on Housing and Economic Development

#### **Testimony LD 901 – “Resolve, Directing the Maine State Housing Authority to Negotiate for the Purchase of or Acquire by Eminent Domain the Land and Buildings Commonly Known as the Bangor Mall”**

March 18, 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 901, Resolve, Directing the Maine State Housing Authority to Negotiate for the Purchase of or Acquire by Eminent Domain the Land and Buildings Commonly Known as the Bangor Mall.

We are greatly appreciative of our delegation’s efforts to spur redevelopment of a currently underutilized space. As Committee members may be aware, earlier this year the City filed suit against the mall owners, Namdar Realty Group LLC, alleging multiple code violations. As of this testimony, we are still awaiting the judge’s ruling, which could result in significant fines being levied as well as require an assessment of and certain repairs to infrastructure.

This entire development is private, and therefore the conditions of the infrastructure such as; roadways, sewer, water and stormwater etc. are unknown and may not meet standards for public use. In addition at over 67 acres, it is unrealistic that the entire parcel should be utilized for solely for housing.

The City has proactively rezoned this areas to allow for mix used development including light industrial and manufacturing, non-retail commercial and residential, indoor recreation, and hotels similar to other mall redevelopment projects across the country.

We are concerned that as currently written LD 901, would direct Maine State Housing Authority to negotiate the purchase of this site and to establish a separate housing authority, which would have limited local representation and appears to limit redevelopment options.

The City has proven its commitment to increasing housing opportunities and certainly envisions that as one potential use for a portion of this parcel. We also are prioritizing economic development which can positively impact our community in a multitude of ways from increased employment opportunities and household income to increased tax revenues and residential homeowner property tax relief as well as enhanced health, wellbeing and environmental benefits. We would request that should the Committee vote out this LD with an ought to pass, that the City in concert with our Legislative delegation work to amend the current language to better reflect the local vision.

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

Cara Pelletier, City Council Chair, [cara.pelletier@bangormaine.gov](mailto:cara.pelletier@bangormaine.gov)  
Debbie Laurie, City Manager, [debbie.laurie@bangormaine.gov](mailto:debbie.laurie@bangormaine.gov)