



## COUNTY OF HANCOCK

Commissioners' Office  
50 State Street, Suite 7  
Ellsworth, Maine 04605

Learn more about *HANCOCK COUNTY* by visiting  
[www.hancockcountymaine.gov](http://www.hancockcountymaine.gov)

### Commissioners:

William Clark, District I/Chair  
John Wombacher, District II  
Samuel DiBella, District III

Michael R. Crooker  
County Administrator

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### *Testimony in Opposition to LD 870 – An Act Regarding the Membership of the Maine Land Use Planning Commission.*

March 20, 2025

Senator Talbot Ross, Representative Pluecker and esteemed members of the Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry

My name is William Clark, Chairperson of the Hancock County Commissioners. I am writing to express the Hancock County Commissioners' opposition to LD 870 and the proposed changes to the membership and composition of the Land Use Planning Commission (LUPC).

The LUPC serves as the planning board and zoning authority of the many Townships located in Hancock County's Unorganized Territory. It is our understanding that the Land Use Planning Commission is currently fully seated with no vacancies and that the 9 members meet on a monthly basis to conduct business in an orderly fashion. We are not aware of any major disruptions in the monthly meetings that has prevented the LUPC from fulfilling its purpose under statute. LD 870 seems to be trying to fix a problem that doesn't exist.

As you are aware, the proposed legislation creates a Commission of 13 by adding 4 appointments by the Governor rather than from local governing bodies. LD 870 also removes all residency requirements from the Governor's appointments. These changes shift the power and composition of the LUPC from the local level to the Governor's Office, which appears to be the sole intended purpose of the legislation.

I ask all of you to consider how you would react to the Maine Legislature suddenly stepping in and providing the Governor with the authority to appoint planning board members in your own community with no requirement of residency and even possibly no shared interest in the Community that they serve.

One further point that should not go unnoticed; LD 870 also erodes the authority of County Commissioners by shrinking the timeline for appointments from 90 to 30 business days with an immediate loss of the County Commissioners' voice in the selection process since it reverts to the Governor after the 30-day time period. Thirty (30) days may seem like a long time but the law requires that the vacancy be advertised in the same way that personnel vacancies are advertised. In Hancock County this means that the LPC vacancy has to be advertised for at least



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10 days in addition to appearing in the newspaper. Assuming the County Commissioners are notified immediately that there is a vacancy, which is not likely to occur, then it would take almost two weeks just to meet this advertising requirement. It also assumes that interested candidates will be found immediately and apply immediately for the LUPC position. The proposed 30-day time period further constrains County Commissions in that most Boards of Commission only meet once or twice a month. Perhaps the 30-day time period is being proposed so that most Commissions will be unable to propose members to the LPC thereby further extending the Governor's authority and influence on these LUPC appointments.

If there are legitimate concerns about the function of the LUPC, then LD 870 is not the solution to those concerns. An opportunity for the development of a solution to these "concerns" should come from a collaborative effort between the Counties and the State. The optics of LD 870 is that it is a power grab for the State of Maine and the Governor's Office.

Thank you for your consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William Clark".

William Clark,  
Hancock County Commission, Chairperson