

Kat Taylor Testimony on LD 870 - *An Act Regarding the Membership of the Maine Land Use Planning Commission*

Thursday, March 20, 2025

Good Afternoon committee members of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry:

Good Afternoon committee members of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry:

My name is Kat Taylor and I am a resident and property owner in Argyle Twp. located about 20 miles north of Bangor. I am one of four generations of my family who have lived on this property.

I am **testifying against LD 870 *An Act Regarding the Membership of the Maine Land Use Planning Commission***

There is another bill currently going through committee regarding LUPC:

LD 383 - *An Act to Facilitate the Consolidation of the DEP and the LUPC into a Single Combined Entity* which was put in the **Housing and Economic Development Committee**, which referred it to the **Environmental and Natural Resources Committee (ENR)**, twice, where it is idle.

Yet here we are at an ACF public hearing on only one of these bills impacting LUPC.

The passing around of these two bills to other committees is indicative of the confusing, convoluted and inefficient oversight of land use of the UT's of Maine.

I am against this bill because I feel it is inappropriate at this time to hold a public hearing **until a decision is made on which committee has oversight so the public can effectively weigh in on both bills**, or a consolidated one.

LUPC decisions impact over 10 million acres of land and an estimated 9,000 permanent residents. **So it is important that these bills be under one committee.**

I respectfully request that the ACF, Housing and Economic Development and Environmental and Natural Resources Committees table these bills until a decision is made on which committee will be the most qualified to legislate this complicated issue.

The members of the determining committee would then have a chance to review these bills, since they seem to be parallel legislation and may conflict.

That committee could then determine if the bills should be merged.

However, **merging LUPC with DEP**, or adding more commissioners is only a stopgap measure. What we really need is to reinstate the **State Planning Office**, under which **land use planning would be under one agency.**

Also, as it stands now, we **UT taxpayers, property owners and residents have no more power than other testifiers or commenters on the decisions made regarding our land.**

We should have the right to protect, conserve and utilize our land, regulated by the same state DEP rules as any other municipality. We could apply to the SPO for permitting just as any other municipality does. This I believe would greatly simplify land use and revenue sharing in the state.

Giving UT's back land use rights **makes the LUPC unnecessary. It can be removed from the General Services Fund saving the state over \$500,000 a year while keeping its valuable personnel by merging them into DEP, as LD 383 recommends, or the SPO.**

The only difference is **there would be only one commissioner as with DEP and ACF.**

The **UT property taxes pay for our services.**

Giving us agency over our land costs the state nothing.

This is an equitable solution.

Lastly, I urge the sponsors of these bills to **advocate to reestablish a State Planning Office with authority over planning, siting and regulating land use.** An SPO would solve a lot of land use problems, and eliminate the duplication of administrative efforts, we now have. I'd be happy to share my research to facilitate your efforts.

Thank you for your time and attention

I'd be happy answer any questions.

Kat Taylor
Argyle Twp.