

Liz Trice
Portland
LD 690

Honorable Committee Members:

My name is Liz Trice. I've lived most of my life in Portland, and I have a masters' degree from the Muskie School in Public Policy with a focus on Community Development. I currently work in housing policy.

I support LD 690 because I believe the heart, soul and economy of Maine is based on our access to unspoiled natural places including forest, farm, and coastline. As Maine grows in population, we have to start investing our public dollars in land use patterns that we want to live with.

I want to live in a state of vibrant small towns, farms, and forests, and believe we can have that if we plan for it. We need to invest more in densifying our small towns rather than sprawling across farms and forest. We need to build more housing where infrastructure already exists, not building new roads. If our only solution is expensive large homes on large lots, we will become a state of subdivisions and highways.

With this in mind, I suggest the following amendments to LD 690:

1. Expand the Rural Affordable Rental Program to statewide, not just rural areas.
2. Designate a portion of total monies, say \$10M, to Community Land Trusts, Limited Equity Cooperatives, and other models that are designed to keep housing costs permanently affordable to residents. These types of housing are important now that the price of housing is increasing so rapidly. Maine Housing has expressed interest in these models, but has said they won't design a program without legislative direction. More information can be obtained from the Maine Shared Equity Housing Network.
3. Designate a portion of total monies, say \$10M, to Accessory Dwelling Units. This type of housing is currently the least expensive and quickest to build, and requires the least subsidy. Vermont's Housing Improvement Program has created 1,000 units in 5 years with low subsidies of \$30-50k/unit. It also puts choice to build in the hand of any homeowner in maine rather than requiring sophisticated developers.
4. Require that all new housing monies be spent on projects in municipally designated growth areas. We need to be putting as much housing in areas that are already walkable village centers to increase the vibrancy of our towns and reduce the loss of farms and wild areas.

Thank you for your consideration; I'm happy to help in any way I can.