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Maine's Rural Development Council

Testimony of Nancy Smith, CEO of GrowSmart Maine in support of LD 1246, Resolve, Directing The Department Of Economic And Community Development To Convene A Working Group To Review The Process Of Setting Impact Fees

April 22, 2025

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development,

My name is Nancy Smith, I live in Ellsworth, and I am the CEO of GrowSmart Maine. We are a statewide non-partisan non-profit organization helping communities navigate change in alignment with smart growth. We advocate for comprehensive policies and funding for smart growth practices and outcomes.

Impact fees play an important role in the development process as a resource for municipalities to bolster and maintain pre-existing and additional infrastructure as growth drives demand. GrowSmart supports impact fees, and to that end, supports LD 1246's intent to review and refine the process of setting fees.

One change that GrowSmart would like to see to LD 1246 is the location of the Working Group – we believe that the Maine Office of Community Affairs (MOCA) would be a better-suited venue to convene stakeholders in this conversation. The Office of Community Affairs was established to be a one-stop-shop for coordination regarding aspects of planning and development that we believe this conversation about impact fees would benefit from. The Housing Opportunity Program, for example, has been reorganized under the umbrella of MOCA.

GrowSmart Maine acknowledges that the process of setting impact fees is not perfect and appreciates the intent to convene a Working Group as laid out by LD 1246. Our recommendation is in pursuit of ensuring that this critical conversation takes place in the right place.

GrowSmart Maine is willing to assist the committee in any way that is helpful.

