

April 25, 2025

RE: Testimony in support of LD 1247, An Act to Restrict Municipal Ordinance Requirements Regarding Housing Developments

Dear Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and Members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing,

My name is Abraham Dailey, I am a self-employed Planning Consultant and resident of Raymond, where I have lived for most of my life. I have a master's degree in Community Planning and Development from the Muskie School of Public Service, and I have a decade of experience working as a planner at the regional and state level in Maine.

I support LD 1247 because this bill will help communities like Raymond address the state's housing crisis by encouraging housing development in the growth areas residents identified in our recently completed state-approved [comprehensive plan](#).

Maine's current housing crisis has deep historical roots. [Housing studies](#) available on the Greater Portland Council of Government's website document a housing crisis in the [late 1970s](#), [mid-1980s](#), [early 1990s](#), [mid-2000s](#), and [mid-2010s](#).

This is not just a "Southern Maine problem". Governor John McKernan [established a Task Force on Affordable Housing in 1987](#) because he recognized the lack of affordable housing in Maine is a direct barrier to economic development in every part of the state, but many of the [recommendations of that Task Force](#) were not implemented. A study on the Municipal Planning Assistance Program (MPAP) web page documents a [statewide housing crisis in 2003](#), but many of the recommendations in that study were not implemented.

The Legislature studied Maine's Growth Management and housing affordability problems in the late 1990s with the [1998 Task Force on Service Center Communities](#), the [1999 Sprawl Task Force](#), and the [2000 Task Force to Study Growth Management](#), but many of those recommendations were not implemented.

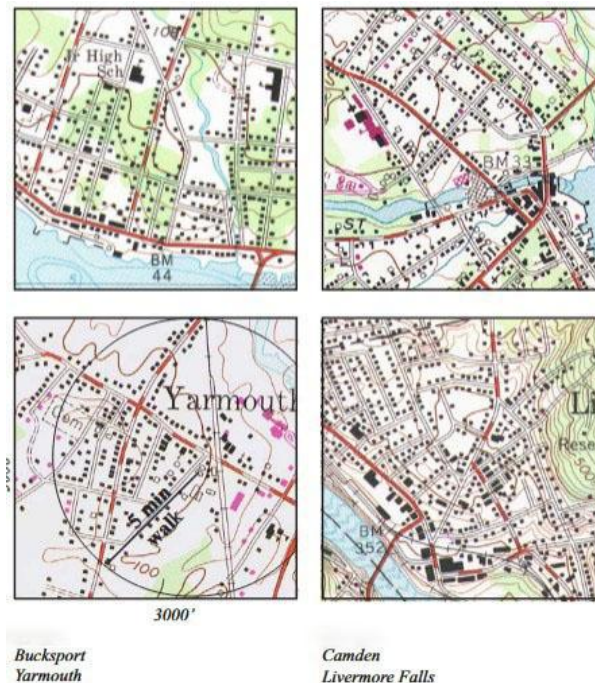
Maine's housing crisis has grown over the past 50 years as the Legislature has been reluctant to enact state legislation that will limit local control, while there has been minimal or no state funding for local planning or plan implementation in two decades. In the absence of state mandates, clear guidance, or funding, many communities in Maine continue to enforce essentially the same zoning they adopted more than 50 years ago, even though this zoning is not consistent with state goals or the goals in the locally adopted comprehensive plan.

Maine's [Growth Management Act](#) (GMA) was intended to stop the spread of urban sprawl across Maine, to encourage orderly, compact development in locally designated growth areas, to protect the state's rural character, and promote economic diversity and affordability in housing, among other goals. The GMA had [strong bipartisan support in the Legislature](#) and was signed into [law](#) by Governor John McKernan 37 years ago this May.

Yet, [periodic evaluations](#) have found that this law has failed to encourage compact, orderly development, and 37 years later, our state has a housing and labor shortage, a structural transportation deficit, and we are still losing working lands to suburban sprawl. These problems are interrelated, and LD 1247 will help solve these problems by empowering people to make better planning decisions at the local level.

Many communities in Maine have completed plans that have a vision for development in their locally designated growth areas, but they have been unable to adopt zoning ordinances that will enable that vision. LD 1247 will solve that problem by providing clear minimum standards for density in locally designated growth areas.

A minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet is based on standard, traditional lot sizes found in most Maine villages and towns and promotes a pattern of development that is walkable and more financially productive for the municipal tax base. For example, see the below illustration from the State Planning Office's 2004 guidance document, [Great American Neighborhoods](#), prepared by Terrence DeWan & Associates in 2004 as a tool to help municipalities encourage a more traditional development pattern.



LD 1247 will empower local communities to solve Maine's housing crisis by enabling the development the people say they want in their locally adopted comprehensive plans. This bill does not limit local control, but rather it empowers people at the local level to make better, more financially sound decisions about the future development patterns in their communities.

I am willing to assist the committee in any way that is helpful.

Sincerely,

Abraham Dailey
Raymond, Maine