



Testimony In Support of L.D.s 1396 and 1272

April 29, 2025 – Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development, my name is Patrick Hess, and I serve as the Director of Real Estate Development at Avesta Housing. Avesta is the largest nonprofit developer of affordable housing in northern New England. I'm here to offer our organization's strong support for L.D. 1396 which was before you last week and L.D. 1272 which is before you today.

Avesta Housing has been dedicated to developing safe, quality, affordable housing for Maine's low-income individuals and families for 53 years. We see firsthand the challenges that Mainers face due to a lack of affordable housing options. Maine needs approximately 84,000 additional homes by 2030 to meet demand, and the rate of housing production must double to achieve this goal.

We support opportunities to bring more predictability to the municipal approvals process and eliminate roadblocks to housing development. By increasing the threshold number of units and parcels that trigger subdivision review, the opportunity for delays will be reduced. Real estate development, especially for affordable housing, is very cost sensitive, and delays invariably lead to increased costs. L.D.s 1396 and 1272 would trigger subdivision review in fewer instances. As a result, these bills would help mitigate unforeseen costs, delays, and unknowns.

In addition, by making it less cumbersome to subdivide a parcel in order to develop multifamily housing, these proposals could encourage infill development. This is especially important as communities look for opportunities to build housing closer to amenities, supported by existing infrastructure, and alongside existing housing.

Overall, reducing unnecessary review can lower barriers to entry and streamline the municipal approvals process, thereby increasing financial feasibility for more developments and ultimately producing more housing. Avesta asks the committee to support these proposals. The need for more housing is critical and these proposals would be another step forward.

Thank you for your consideration and I would be happy to answer any questions.

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