



**WRITTEN TESTIMONY PROVIDED IN FAVOR OF
LD 1751 “An Act to Improve the Growth Management Program Laws”**

DATE OF HEARING: Thursday, May 8 2025

**Honorable Senator Curry, Honorable Representative Gere, and Distinguished Members of the
Housing and Economic Development Committee:**

The Town of Orono is currently in the middle of an update to our Comprehensive Plan. Our last Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 2015 after a nearly three year long process. Prior to the 2015 update, the Plan had not been comprehensively updated since 1998, largely due to the time and cost of doing so.

We are in favor of LD1751, which is designed to address the concerns that we as a community have with the comprehensive planning process. Currently, comprehensive planning is plagued by costly and often overly burdensome data analysis required by the state’s rules governing comprehensive plans (“Chapter 208”). These rules require exhaustive chapters of data to be compiled and analyzed, and result in extremely lengthy (250+ page) and expensive planning documents.

We are currently being assisted by a consultant and the required questions and data analysis means that one of the most expensive parts of the planning process thus far has been the data compilation and interpretation, before the consultant ever interacts with the appointed Comprehensive Plan Committee or the public.

LD1751 would direct the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to address known issues in Chapter 208, the Comprehensive Plan Review Criteria Rule, which should encourage even the smallest or most under-resourced communities to regularly update their comp plans. More importantly, it would improve comprehensive planning by requiring DACF to establish a tiered framework for inventory requirements based on municipal and regional conditions, matching requirements to the capacity of municipalities rather than the current one-size-fits-all approach.

In sum, the bill and the subsequent rule-making that it directs would allow municipalities to invest less volunteer and/or professional time on data inventories, and more time on action and implementation.

Sincerely,

Clinton Deschene
Town Manager

Mitchell Stone
Assistant Town Manager