

Lou Simms
Gorham
LD 1940

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and Members of the Committee on Housing and Economic Development;

My name is Lou Simms. I am a member of Gorham's Town Council, and I write this testimony speaking on my own behalf.

Please accept this testimony IN SUPPORT of LD 1940, An Act to Revise the Growth Management Law.

As a member of Gorham's Town Council, I have been bewildered by the overly complicated nature of our current processes for planning and zoning. I trust that our current processes were built with good intentions by well-meaning individuals; however, we must recognize that our current processes have played a major role in producing some of the pressing challenges of our time, including:

- 1) a severe housing shortage and a housing affordability crisis in our State;
- 2) sprawling development patterns that cost our municipalities too much to service, relative to the amount of property tax revenue generated, while rapidly consuming our remaining open spaces and rural areas;
- 3) a need for improved integration of transportation planning and land-use planning;
- 4) overly restrictive separation of land-uses, which creates a built environment where residents are forced to drive an automobile as the only viable means of transportation; not only does this worsen the housing affordability crisis, by adding an estimated cost of \$12,000 per vehicle per household, but this severe separation of land-uses has been demonstrated to be a leading cause of traffic congestion: when everyone is forced to drive everywhere for every single daily need, traffic congestion is unavoidable at peak hours.

In my view, LD1940 makes it possible for municipalities to more effectively develop comprehensive plans that can help our communities address these challenges more effectively moving forward.

I thank you all for your time and efforts on this committee, and for your consideration of these critical matters affecting our communities.