

Committee On Housing and Economic Development  
Testimony of Laura Reading, Developers Collaborative  
May 13, 2025

**Testimony in favor of LD1829 - An Act to Build Housing for Maine Families and Attract Workers to Maine Businesses by Amending the Laws Governing Municipal Land Use Decisions**

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

My name is Laura Reading, and I am the Director of Affordable Housing at Developers Collaborative, a leading developer of affordable housing in Maine. I also serve as the Chair of the Board of Directors for the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition. I am submitting this testimony in support for “An Act to Build Housing for Maine Families and Attract Workers to Maine Businesses by Amending the Laws Governing Municipal Land Use Decisions.” This legislation is a step toward addressing our state’s housing crisis by ensuring that permitting for housing developments is a streamlined process without unnecessary delays, which means added costs.

We at Developers Collaborative value smart growth development, meaning development that is located efficiently based on existing infrastructure and amenities, which saves both upfront costs and ongoing maintenance costs. LD1829 would both encourage the development of new housing units in either designated growth areas or areas served by public water and sewer and prohibit growth caps for residential development in designated growth areas, encouraging the creation of housing units where there is existing infrastructure. However, while LD1829 would establish a minimum number of dwelling units per lot in these areas, it is important to ensure that these minimums are not applied to larger lots that have the potential to support additional units.

Additionally, LD1829 supports a streamlined administrative review for developments in these areas of up to four units. Smaller developments are inherently more expensive to build on a per unit basis so reducing the time and costs of the permitting process can help to make these developments more feasible.

LD1829 would also allow affordable housing developments to exceed any height restrictions otherwise applicable but by no more than 14 feet. This provides municipalities with the flexibility to accommodate some additional height while also maintaining heights that are appropriate for the community. One example I can see this being particularly impactful is areas where the height limit is 30 feet but the building design is more appropriate with a pitched roof. Strict adherence to a 30 foot height with a pitched roof creates an inefficient third floor with varying roof angles and dormers but with an additional allowance of 10 feet, could support a smaller footprint and a more efficient building with a pitched roof.

LD1829 also presents the idea of a Housing Development Resolution Board which has the potential to help enforce adherence to local ordinances in a timely manner. This Board could help resolve disputes for both developers who believe their development was unfairly denied and for stakeholders who believe a development was approved without adhering to the required process or standards. Currently these disputes have the potential to take over a year and significant attorney fees to settle, discouraging developers to advocate for their development while encouraging stakeholders who intentionally want to delay and add costs to unwanted developments.

In summary, this bill presents steps in the right direction to encouraging and streamlining new housing units in Maine while ensuring compatibility with existing infrastructure and neighborhood amenities. By providing greater predictability

in the permitting process, it will encourage investment, create jobs, and, most importantly, provide safe and stable homes for Maine residents. I urge you to support this bill and help ensure that all Mainers have access to affordable housing.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. Reading". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter being a large capital "L".

Laura Reading  
Director of Affordable Housing  
Developers Collaborative