



REAL ESTATE - DESIGN - CONSTRUCTION

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Testimony in Support

LD 1396, An Act to Amend Maine's Municipal Subdivision Standards to Increase the Number of Dwelling Units on or Divisions of a Tract of Land Before the Tract is Considered a Subdivision

April 25, 2025, 1:00 p.m.

Chairman Curry, Chairwoman Gere, and Honorable Members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee;

My name is Shannon Richards and I am writing in support of LD 1396, An Act to Amend Maine's Municipal Subdivision Standards to Increase the Number of Dwelling Units on or Divisions of a Tract of Land Before the Tract is Considered a Subdivision.

This legislation is critically important to unlock the potential of so-called LD 2003, which allows increased density on residentially zoned lots. While LD 2003 permits an individual to build up to two residential units and an ADU on any land that is zoned residential, it does not exempt the creation of those units from statutory municipal subdivision review. The requirement to undergo that review can add time and substantial cost to a small infill development project. By raising the threshold for statutory municipal subdivision review from 3 or more units or lots to 5 or more units or lots, we can encourage small infill development projects and unlock new housing opportunities.

Many small landowners are well-positioned to help relieve Maine's housing burden by subdividing their land into small subdivisions. Today, the limitation that a lot be divided into not more than 2 lots (before triggering statutory municipal subdivision) review limits the ability of small developers to create infill housing at an affordable rate. Small, village-green style subdivisions are popular because they create a sense of community – until the statutory municipal subdivision threshold is changed, they will continue to be challenging to permit and expensive to build.

Changes to Maine's subdivision law were a key recommendation of the recent HR&A Roadmap to the Future of Housing Production. Recommendation 1.6 specifically discusses the need to revise the threshold upward with respect to units. MEREDA believes this recommendation does not go far enough, because the low threshold for lot splitting is as prohibitive to housing creation as the unit threshold. The HED Committee will also consider LD 1272, sponsored by Speaker Fecteau, which proposes to make the same changes relating to the lot and unit threshold increase. We believe this speaks clearly to the unified need of the housing advocacy community to make this change in the law.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this important policy initiative, and for all you do for the State of Maine.

Sincerely,

Shannon Richards,

Volunteer President MEREDA

Hay Runner