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February 10, 2026

-VIA IN-PERSON TESTIMONY-

Senator Chip Curry, Chair
Representative Traci Gere, Chair
Committee on Housing and Economic Development
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: LD 2173, An Act to Update the Laws Regarding Housing Developments and Accessory Dwelling Units

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

We are opposed to LD 2173, *An Act to Update the Laws Regarding Housing Developments and Accessory Dwelling Units*, as currently written. This fix bill to LD 1829, *An Act to Build Housing for Maine Families and Attract Workers to Maine Businesses by Amending the Laws Governing Housing Density* does not address the concerns raised by municipalities in our region.

The Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission (LCRPC) serves the nineteen (19) municipalities within Lincoln County, Maine, providing regional planning; land use; economic and community development; transportation; broadband planning; and environmental sustainability technical assistance.

We have provided planning assistance and collaborated with key agencies on affordable housing efforts in the midcoast region for years, including our 2023 Lincoln County Housing Needs Assessment; 2025 Priority Site Inventory for Housing Development; working with Lincoln County Commissioners to award \$1.5 million to affordable housing projects; and a sewer and water extension feasibility study currently underway.

The need for more housing is acute in Lincoln County, as well as the State overall, and we have been working with our communities to increase housing opportunities. This work is being done with an understanding of the differences between rural, ultra-rural, suburban, and urban geographies to ensure projects and ordinance updates are designed with nuance and recognition of these differences.

A one-size-fits-all approach to zoning reform is not practical. We are in support of seeing increased density in areas where it makes sense to the individual community. For example, infill or redevelopment of sites that are within a growth area; connected to public infrastructure that has capacity to meet the demand; near jobs, shopping, schools and transit. **We advocate you consider a more thoughtful, individualized approach to zoning reform to increase housing supply.**

One unintended consequence of LD 1829 that regional planning organizations are already seeing is communities un-adopting their existing comprehensive plan or removing/severely restricting growth areas in their draft comp plan updates to avoid the significant density mandates. If such regulations are not fixed through LD 2173, we anticipate this trend to continue. A lack or significant reduction in growth areas may lead to sprawl as well as reduce a community or developer's eligibility for certain MaineHousing programs.

In addition to the issues raised above, we also **express concern with the following gaps in LD 2173:**

- *No infrastructure funding or support:* LD 2173 does not create dedicated infrastructure funds, prioritize state funding for growth areas or revise impact fee restrictions.
- *Does not restore growth management tools:* Fast-growing municipalities still cannot use growth caps in designated growth areas. The 130% requirement and shorter calculation period actually make growth caps harder to use.
- *Still mandates density outside growth areas:* LD 2173 does not remove lot size and density requirements for areas outside growth areas served by water/sewer, meaning the perverse incentive to develop along infrastructure corridors in rural and natural areas remains.
- *No affordability provisions:* LD 2173 contains no technical assistance, funding, or mechanisms for tracking affordability covenants.

We encourage you to amend LD 2173 to be a more nuanced approach to zoning changes. Lincoln County communities are eager to see more housing development. Our region is making significant advancement in this area. We believe this progress is in part due to towns and developers working together to design their projects for the individual community's size, infrastructure, and amenities.

Sincerely,

Emily Rabbe
Executive Director

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