



February 16, 2026

Chairs, Senators, Representatives, and distinguished members of the Committee:

My name is Liz Trice and I serve as the Policy and Partnerships Director for Backyard ADUs, a Brunswick-based construction company that builds accessory dwelling units and small multifamily housing across Maine, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. We have built more than 50 accessory dwelling units in Maine since our founding 6 years ago, and are arguably the state's largest ADU builder.

**I am here to express our support for LD 2173 and its amendments to LD 1829.**

We strongly support the bill's effort to establish consistent, statewide standards and to allow more than one housing unit per lot. Maine is in a severe housing shortage. The lack of supply is directly tied to rising prices and declining affordability. Allowing modest increases in density—especially on existing residential lots—is one of the most cost-effective and practical ways to respond.

Building additional homes on existing lots saves substantially on infrastructure and land costs. Roads, water, sewer, and utilities are already in place. Housing created in these areas is more likely to be close to sidewalks, schools, parks, and local businesses. This means more walkability, more foot traffic for small businesses, and stronger local tax bases. It also moves our communities closer to historical occupancy patterns. A generation ago, homes often housed three or more people. Today, that number is often closer to two or fewer. Allowing more units on a lot simply restores population levels to what our neighborhoods were originally designed to support.

**We agree with some concerns raised in other testimony.** Allowing unlimited additional units outside designated growth areas—even where water and sewer exist—could contribute to sprawl in places without sidewalks or destinations within walking distance. From that perspective we could understand leaving larger lot sizes. However, the current proposal which moves from one unit to two, we believe would just replace previous population levels.

**We are also sympathetic to concerns in many of our coastal communities, where new units may become high-priced seasonal homes or primarily short-term rentals.**

**We offer two ideas in response:**

**First, consider allowing one additional unit by right, and permitting up to four units per lot tied to affordability,** ie allowing if at least one of those units carries a covenant restricting rent to a level affordable to households earning 100% of area median income. This would directly tie added density to year-round local affordability.

**Second, Maine should consider supporting a short-term rental regulation program to towns.** A registration and licensing program, with local caps set by municipalities, would provide balance. The City of Portland has implemented a thoughtful system that uses a third party to confirm listings on Airbnb, VRBO, and similar platforms match short-term rental licenses for enforcement. Portland also requires proof of homestead exemption for owner occupied short-term rentals and caps the total number of non owner-occupied short-term rentals relative to long-term rentals, ie capping non-owner occupied STR licenses at 2% or so of the total number of rental units. These tools can be effective.

However, most small Maine towns lack the staffing capacity to administer such programs. The state could establish a centralized short-term rental registration and enforcement platform that towns may opt into. Alternatively, the Legislature could provide funding or incentives for regional entities, such as councils of governments, to administer these programs on behalf of multiple communities.

Backyard ADUs is eager to continue building small, high-quality, energy-efficient homes throughout Maine. Thoughtful density in existing neighborhoods can strengthen our towns, support local businesses, expand the tax base, and provide housing that Maine families can actually afford.

We appreciate the Committee's work on LD 2173 and look forward to collaborating with you and with municipalities to ensure its successful implementation.

Thank you for your consideration.



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