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April 11, 2023

Testimony in Opposition of LD 214 An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding Zoning and Land Use Restrictions to Limit Certain Requirements to Municipalities with a Population of More than 10,000

Greetings Senator Pierce, Representative Gere and members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing. I am Bridget Quinn, Associate State Director of Advocacy and Outreach for AARP Maine.

AARP is the nation's largest nonprofit, nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering Americans 50 and older to choose how they live as they age. On behalf of our more than 200,000 members statewide, thank you for the opportunity to share testimony. Today I am testifying in opposition to LD 214 and two other bills you are hearing, today, LD 665 and LD 1154. All three of these bills seek to weaken the language and implementation of LD 2003 which passed in the 130th legislative session.

Housing is central to community and individual well-being. The type and location of a home can affect almost every aspect of a person's life. The fact is we are in an affordable housing crisis in Maine. The National Low Income Housing Coalition estimates that Maine has a shortage of over 20,000 rental homes for extremely low-income renters.¹ Further, Statista/AARP analysis of data available by United States Census Bureau (USCB) predicts that in 2023;

- Nearly 1,300 individuals in Maine will experience homelessness, 609 of them will be 55 or older.
- Approximately 2,161 individuals will be evicted, 964 of them will be adults aged 55 or older.

The passage of LD 2003 was a crucial step forward to create a solution to Maine's affordable housing crisis. LD 2003 enabled residential property owners to become part of the solution by allowing accessory dwelling units or duplexes on their single-family property. This innovative approach could be particularly impactful to Maine's older adults.

¹ <https://nlihc.org/housing-needs-by-state/maine>

Mainer's want to remain in the communities as long as possible. AARP's 2021 Home and Community Preferences survey found that over three-quarters (77%) of adults aged 50 and older want to remain in their homes as they age.²

Increasing the number of multigenerational households, providing more options like accessory dwelling units (ADUs) or "in-law units", and encouraging renovations that support aging-in-place are all critical to support this desire. Further, the same survey reported that "around 60% of adults indicated they would consider living in ADUs, 62% of adults would consider building an ADU on their property to provide a place for a loved one needing care or a family member or friend who needs a home (54%)."

LD 214, LD 665 and LD 1154 seek to limit, delay, or make optional the provisions of LD 2003. This would be incredibly detrimental to Maine's older residents who are looking for solutions that will allow them to age in place on a limited income.

We urge this committee to oppose LD 214, LD 665, and LD 1154 to, protect the important steps Maine has taken to ease the affordable housing crisis and to support Mainer's who wish to age in place. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. If you have questions for me, I can be reached at bquinn@aarp.org or at 207-272-8563.

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² Binette, Joanne. 2021 Home and Community Preference Survey: A National Survey of Adults Age 18-Plus. Washington, DC: AARP Research, November 2021. <https://doi.org/10.26419/res.00479.001>