

131st Legislature
Senate of Maine
Senate District 28

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Testimony of Senator Ben Chipman introducing LD 1593, “An Act to Increase Affordable Housing Development.”
Before the Joint Select Committee on Housing
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Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and Distinguished members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing, my name is Ben Chipman and I represent Senate District 28, which includes part of Portland. I am here to introduce LD 1593, “An Act to Increase Affordable Housing Development.”

This legislation would remove restrictions on constructing or converting existing structures into residential housing. LD 1593 removes minimum lot size requirements for multiple unit housing, dwelling unit density requirements for single-family or multifamily housing, and minimum size requirements for accessory dwelling units outside of the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC).

The housing crisis in this state is dire. It is up to us at the State House to ensure that we are doing everything we can to find ways to address this crisis. My contribution is to lift restrictions to expand opportunities to create housing. Under current laws protecting zoning ordinances, there are many lots that cannot be built on because of existing ordinances enforced by municipalities. In order to create more opportunities to build new or repurpose existing housing, we can allow construction on lots that were previously deemed forbidden from residential use.

In a time when so many are losing their homes, it is important that we take extraordinary measures. Housing cannot be built unless we can ensure that land is available to do so.

Thank you for your consideration and I would be happy to answer questions.