



City of Presque Isle, Maine

The Office of
Director of Economic & Community Development

Galen Weibley

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Good afternoon Chairwoman Pierce, Chairwoman Gere, and Esteemed Members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing:

My name is Galen Weibley and I am the Director of Economic & Community Development for the City of Presque Isle. I arrive today from the far north to offer my testimony in support of LD 1752 as a vital tool to help foster new housing development in rural Maine.

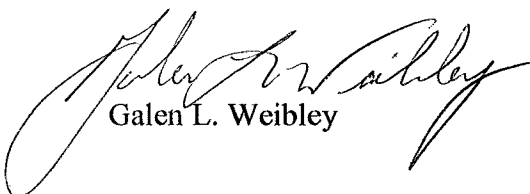
LD 1752 is the product of grassroots discussions between developers, municipal leaders, code officials, and housing advocates to discover new ways we can reduce the time to construct new homes in Maine. The importance of this new tool in development is not to be underestimated and I would like to take my time to share how this bill is a win-win for municipalities and housing developers that expedite permit reviews while respecting home rule. In addition, I would also like to highlight how this bill will address the economic inequality faced in rural Maine to new housing projects.

While municipal officials have reservations for many bills that conflict with home rule being proposed in the legislature, LD 1752 respects municipalities rights under the constitution by allowing communities to choose which if any of the available building templates fit within their neighborhoods. By allowing this local opt-in option, municipalities save time in reviewing permit applications since these templates are stamped by a professional engineer in Maine to meet Maine's building and life safety codes.

In addition, given the average age of housing stock in Maine, LD 1752 begins to address the economic inequalities in rural Maine which lack the private investment and local experience in developing new housing projects. Specifically, these local developers benefit from reducing the logistical and financial barrier to entering into the market by utilizing pre-approved building templates. The hope is that by encouraging and empowering new housing developers within rural Maine, we may start to experience new housing opportunities throughout all of Maine to meet the statewide goals of the legislature and administration.

Thank you for your valued time for expressing my support for LD 1752. I look forward to answering any questions you may have regarding my testimony today.

Sincerely,



Galen L. Weibley