

May 10, 2023

Joint Standing Committee on Taxation
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re Support of LD 1739, *An Act to Extend Development District Tax Increment Financing Districts*

Senator Grohowski, Representative Perry, and Members of the Taxation Committee,

Please accept this letter as the testimony of the Metro Regional Coalition (MRC) which voted unanimously this week to support LD 1739, *An Act to Extend Development District Tax Increment Financing Districts*

The MRC is a longstanding collaboration between the cities of Portland, South Portland, and Westbrook, and the towns of Cape Elizabeth, Falmouth, Gorham, and Scarborough, staffed by the Greater Portland Council of Governments. The MRC focuses its work on issues impacting Greater Portland, from housing and homelessness to municipal and regional partnerships wherever possible.

For many years the MRC has worked to address the growing issue of unaffordable housing costs in our region. The MRC communities have worked together to support each other as we advanced housing strategies that increase affordability of houses and apartments for low- and moderate-income and working families.

We have made progress, but much more remains to be done. LD 1739 proposes to allow municipalities, at their discretion, to extend expiring tax increment financing districts if the extended TIF is focused on affordable housing and transit TIF purposes.

We believe LD 1739 will effectively focus expiring TIFs on the state's housing and public transportation priorities, producing a benefit to state policy and local finances. It's a win-win that we encourage you to endorse by passing LD 1739.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views, and please let me know if the members of the MRC can provide anything more to support your important work on this issue.

Sincerely,



Michael Foley
Chair, Metro Regional Coalition
Mayor, City of Westbrook

Testimony of the Greater Portland Council of Governments
In Support of
LD 1739, An Act to Extend Development District Tax Increment Financing Districts

May 10, 2023

Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry, and Members of the Taxation Committee, my name is Christian Roadman, Senior Planner at the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG)

I am here today to speak on behalf of GPCOG in support of LD 1739, *An Act to Extend Development District Tax Increment Financing Districts*

GPCOG serves 25 municipal members in Cumberland County, from Sebago Lake to Casco Bay, as well as Saco, Biddeford, Arundel, and Old Orchard Beach through the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS). We deliver transportation, land use, sustainability, and economic development services to our members and their communities. Earlier this week GPCOG's Metro Regional Coalition, comprised of the cities of Portland, South Portland, and Westbrook, and the towns of Cape Elizabeth, Falmouth, Gorham, and Scarborough, voted unanimously to endorse LD 1739 and to urge you to do the same.

Extending expiring tax increment finance districts with a focus on affordable housing and transit will facilitate responsible development benefiting lower-income and middle-class Mainers. Our municipalities suffer from an acute lack of housing, and we need more tools to ensure its production in areas ready for development.

As you know, many housing projects need financial support to make the economics work, LD 1739 would help in that regard by enabling housing TIFs. The bill would also encourage more widespread use of TIFs to spur development in regionally appropriate areas served by relevant infrastructure and transit.

As a regional planning agency, GPCOG sees the need to support more housing at every level of affordability with resources like those proposed in LD 1739. At a meeting yesterday, several municipal representatives noted that LD 1739 is a significant opportunity for expanding housing choices in our region.

GPCOG is working with our member communities to implement the state-level housing policy changes that began last year with LD 2003. As we do, we often find our members asking what more they can do to bring forward housing that all parts of the community can afford.

LD 1739's enactment will add another valuable policy tool to the municipal housing toolkit, and for that reason we urge you to vote 'ought to pass' on LD 1739.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support for this bill, and please let me know if we can do anything to advance your work on this important legislation.

Helping communities thrive and prosper in the Greater Portland and Lakes Region

970 Baxter Blvd , Suite 201 • Portland, Maine, 04103 • Tel (207) 774-9891 • www.gpcog.org