



City of Auburn, Maine

Office of the City Manager

60 Court Street | Auburn, Maine 04210

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**TESTIMONY OF CITY MANAGER PHILLIP L. CROWELL, Jr.,
CITY OF AUBURN**

**(Opposition Of) LD 371
"An Act to Address Certain Local Zoning Ordinances"**

BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

HEARING DATE: May 16, 2023 at 1:00 P.M. in Room 214, Cross Building

Good afternoon, Senator Nangle, Representative Stover, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government. Thank you for the opportunity to come before you today. My name is Phil Crowell, City Manager for the City of Auburn. I urge the committee to vote against this bill introduced by Senator Timberlake.

Before I proceed with my testimony on why this bill is baseless and should not be given consideration, I want to share with you my concern on the lack of transparency with the process of how this bill came before you. As of this morning, there was no text language for this bill on the state website. If it wasn't for someone who gave me notification that this bill being proposed was specifically targeting the City of Auburn, I would not have known to come before you and speak about the inappropriate time being wasted by this committee and the taxpayers of the State of Maine. Your job is challenging and time-consuming and this bill is taking up the necessary time you need for the urgent matters facing our state.

Maine is a home rule state, in which the residents of each community are entrusted to adopt the unique polices necessary to achieve desired outcomes. That path is guided by comprehensive plans and ordinances that are appropriately vetted via public meetings and hearings before finally being adopted by the local legislative body. As a result, we



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have a diverse mix of urban centers, tourist destinations, farming areas and bedroom communities.

The City of Auburn is fortunate to have designations in each of those categories. Auburn is successful because we have strong zoning ordinances to ensure harmony with the various types of land uses. The Auburn ordinance being challenged by Senator Timberlake established new definitions for Public Safety facilities, correctional facilities, and related uses. Prior to this recent ordinance change, there was only a broad category of Government Offices and Services that could cover a wide range of uses that had very different potential impacts. The Planning Board and staff worked to define the different uses by reviewing numerous other communities' ordinances and best practices as a guide. They then determined where these ordinances could be appropriate and what special impacts should be addressed by conditions.

The Auburn Planning Board met in workshop on four occasions to discuss these changes. If you read the ordinance, it closely mirrors that of the City of Augusta. The Planning Board also held two public hearings and readings before submitting the language to the Auburn City Council for consideration. The Auburn City Council held a workshop and two public hearings and readings before final adoption.

As you can see, the work done by the Auburn Planning Board and City Council was extensive, transparent, and thorough. It was also accomplished to address the concerns of residents and businesses who may be directly impacted by certain facility uses.

I appreciate the opportunity to appear here before you. My sincere apologies to the committee for having this unnecessary bill brought before you. I will gladly answer any questions you may have, either at this public hearing or at a future work session.