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**TESTIMONY OF CATHERINE E. PENDERGAST
ADMINISTRATOR, MAINE STATE BOARD FOR LICENSURE OF ARCHITECTS,
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS AND INTERIOR DESIGNERS**

DEPARTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL AND FINANCIAL REGULATION

IN SUPPORT OF L.D. 2060

***“An Act to Amend Licensing Requirements for Landscape Architects”
(Emergency)***

Sponsored by Representative Tiffany Roberts

Before the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business

Public Hearing: Tuesday, January 23, 2024 at 1:00 p.m.

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts and Members of the Committee, my name is Catherine Pendergast, and I am the Administrator of the Maine State Board for Licensure of Architects, Landscape Architects and Interior Designers. I am here to speak in favor of LD 2060 *“An Act to Amend Licensing Requirements for Landscape Architects.”*

The Department has brought this bill forward for your consideration in an effort to establish a more streamlined approach to examination and licensure for landscape architects. The Board recently amended its rules to permit candidates to apply directly to the Council on Landscape Architect Boards (“CLARB”) to sit for the required Landscape Architect Registration Examination (“L.A.R.E.”).

However, Maine law requires that any exam candidate have completed certain requirements *before* being eligible to sit for the examination, requiring a review of those credentials. CLARB temporarily agreed to evaluate education and experience for exam candidates through the end of 2024. CLARB asked the Department to seek a legislative change to align the landscape architect law with that of architects to remove this requirement altogether, so that candidates can be approved to sit for the exam without this additional verification of credentials. To be clear, these education and experience credentials are later vetted by Board staff when the individual applies for licensure *after* passage of the examination.

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The bill also seeks to align the landscape architect provisions in the law with that for architects, by authorizing the Board to specify, in rule, the required amount of practical experience an applicant for licensure as a landscape architect must complete before obtaining a license. This change mirrors a change that was made to the provision for architects in 2016. P.L. 2105, c. 414 (eff. Mar. 29, 2016).

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the bill. I am happy to answer any questions from the Committee now or at the work session.