



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION & FORESTRY
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
22 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

AMANDA E. BEAL
COMMISSIONER

**TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SUPPORT OF LD 546**

Resolve, to Require the Preparation of Preapproved Building Types

March 4, 2025

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development, my name is Judy East. I am the Director of the Bureau of Resource Information and Land Use Planning (BRILUP) within the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry (DACF). I am speaking in support of LD 1546, "*Resolve, to Require the Preparation of Preapproved Building Types.*"

This Resolve is substantially the same as the final version of LD 1752 from the 131st Legislature. It requires BRILUP to contract with a consultant to establish a set of preapproved building types that municipalities may adopt to reduce the cost and time associated with processing building permit applications. BRILUP must report on its efforts to this committee no later than November 4, 2026. This committee may report legislation relating to the subject matter of the report to the First Regular Session of the 133rd Legislature.

The Municipal Planning Assistance Program (MPAP), currently at BRILUP, the Housing Opportunity Program, currently at the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD), and the Code Enforcement Training and Certification Program (CETCP), currently at the Fire Marshall's Office are subject matter experts in the area of preapproved building types and the affordability, life safety compliance, and land use considerations to be included in the report back to this committee. MPAP, HOP, and CETCP are all proposed to move to the Maine Office of Community Affairs (MOCA) in July 2025. Therefore, we suggest that MOCA manage the issues proposed in the Resolve.

In addition, the research BRILUP conducted last year on the cost of issuing the contract for preapproved building types resulted in a fiscal note of \$350,000. BRILUP has met with Samantha Horn, MOCA Director, Hilary Gove, HOP Program Coordinator, and the Governor's housing advisors, Greg Payne and Brian Hubbell, to discuss how the administration can work with the Committee to achieve the goals of the Resolve given the biennial budgetary constraints. Several current and pending initiatives may offer a way forward without incurring such a substantial fiscal note. HOP has received proposals from three service providers to create preapproved building types that, if funded, could substitute for some of the building types

HARLOW BUILDING
18 ELKINS LANE
AUGUSTA, MAINE



PHONE: (207) 287-3200
FAX: (207) 287-2400
WEB: WWW.MAINE.GOV/DACF

referenced in the Resolve. The cities of Auburn and Bangor issued RFP/RFQs in 2022 and 2023 to establish preapproved building types. Auburn did not proceed with awarding a bid. Bangor awarded a bid to an architectural firm. Conceptual drawings for two ADUs, two two-unit structures, and two three-unit structures are available on Bangor's website. Detailed architectural plans, not yet completed, will be proprietary to Bangor. Thus, securing these plans for a statewide audience will have fiscal implications.

If the HOP projects can generate a variety of preapproved building types with architectural details that are fully in the public domain, then the work of a contractor and MOCA staff would be limited to addressing median income calculations, public engagement, a catalog of preapproved building types and prototypical site plans (generated by others), and input from a postsecondary institution on new technologies to produce efficient and affordable materials and designs. Until the HOP grants are awarded, likely in mid-March, we will not know if those proposals collectively serve the building types called for in the Resolve. The HOP-funded work could result in a lower fiscal note.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions now or at the work session.