

Testimony Of Priscilla Ngaliema of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce

LD. 427, An Act to Prohibit Mandatory Parking Space Minimums in State and Municipal Building Codes

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and members of the committee on Housing and Economic Development, my name is Priscilla Ngaliema. I am an intern at Maine Chamber of Commerce, and I am here on behalf of the organization, and have focused my work this semester on housing and economic development.

The Maine Chamber supports the effort to reduce housing costs by not reducing the burdens of parking requirement on new housing development and appreciates Representative Roeder for bringing this legislation before the Committee. We believe the legislation is consistent with the spirit of the recent report presented by HR&A to promote meet Maine's housing production goals. Specifically, the report outlined recommendation 1.7, "Reform State and local building codes to reduce the cost of development."

At the same time, we do believe that municipalities should have the authority to impose reasonable requirements on parking to ensure that the development is consistent with economic development plans. Businesses do rely on available parking, especially for retail shopping, and there is always a tension in ensuring that housing development is not overburdened by costly requirements and not undermining other economic considerations. We do have several recommendations to move this legislation forward. Specifically, we would recommend the following options:

1. **State Maximums.** DECD in consultation with the office of community affairs establish maximum municipal parking requirements for housing development;
2. **State Limitations.** Put into statute specific prohibitions. These could include 1-1 requirements of parking spaces to units, or allowing compact spaces to count; or
3. **Study.** Include this as part of a comprehensive assessment of municipal building codes.

Again, we thank Representative Roeder for bringing this legislation forward and efforts to lower the costs of building housing in Maine.