



MAINE AFFORDABLE HOUSING COALITION

31 Housing of Maine
 55 Weston Avenue
 ASPP Maine
 ABG Consulting, Gray
 Acorn Engineering, Inc.
 Allied Cost Construction, Portland
 Anew Development LLC, Portland
 Apartments for People LLC, Belfast
 Archetype Architects, Portland
 Associated General Contractors of Maine
 Auburn Housing Authority
 Augusta Housing Authority
 Avesta Housing, Portland
 Bangor Area Homeless Shelter
 Bangor Housing
 Bangor Savings Bank
 Bank of New Hampshire, Falmouth
 Bath Housing
 Bath Savings Institution
 Belkether Enterprise
 Benchmark Construction, Westbrook
 Boston Financial Investment Management
 Bowman Constructors, Newport
 Brunswick Housing Authority
 Camden National Bank
 Carpenter Associates
 Catholic Charities of Maine
 CEI, Brunswick
 CHA Architecture, Portland
 Civic Housing Department of Housing
 Clark Insurance, Portland
 Community Concepts, LEWISTON
 Consigni Housing Solutions, Portland
 Consigni Construction Co., Inc.
 Cooperative Development Institute, South Freeport
 Cooperative Fund of the Northeast
 CREA, LLC
 Credere Associates, Westbrook
 Cumberland Corp., Portland
 Cumberland County
 Curtis Thayer, Portland
 CVK Architects, Portland
 Developers Collaborative, Portland
 Development Services of New England, Freeport
 Dovelat Consulting
 Drummond/Woodsum, Portland
 Ducos Construction, Inc.
 Dunbar & Brown Construction
 Eagle Point Development, LLC
 Eaton Peabody Consulting Group, Augusta
 Eric Brumster
 Evermore, Portland
 Falmouth, Town of
 Fivefield Residential Development Corp.
 Four Directions Development Corporation, Orono
 Freeport Community Services
 Freeport Housing Trust
 Furniture Friends
 Ganeston Construction, Augusta
 Gannon Turgeon Architects, Scarborough
 Genesis Community Loan Fund, Brunswick
 Garham Savings Bank
 Greaves Construction, Gorham
 Grommes Pulas Consulting LLC, Portland
 GrowSmart Maine
 Habitat for Humanity of Greater Portland
 Habitat for Humanity York County
 Hancock Lumber, Casco
 Healthy Androsoggin, Lewiston
 Hebert Construction
 Home Start, Peaks Island
 Homeless Voices for Justice, Portland
 Housing Foundation, Orono
 Housing Initiatives of New England, Portland
 Housing Partnership, Portsmouth, NH
 Hunt Capital Partners LLC, El Paso, TX
 Island Institute, Rockland
 Islesboro Affordable Property
 Jensen Baird Gardner & Henry, Portland
 John Anton, Consultant, Portland
 Kaplan Thompson Architects, Portland
 Kennebec Savings Bank, Augusta
 Kennebec Valley Community Action, Waterville
 Kennebec Savings
 KeyBank
 Knox County Homeless Coalition
 Lake Investments, LLC
 Landry/French Construction, Scarborough
 LaRoche Consulting, LLC, Augusta
 Lassel Architects, South Berwick
 LB Development Partners, Portland
 LeadingAge Maine & New Hampshire
 Lewiston Housing Authority
 M&T Bank
 Machias Savings Bank
 Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services
 Maine Community Action Partnership
 Maine Community Bank
 Maine Department of Health & Human Services
 Maine Equal Justice
 Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition
 Maine Public Health Association
 Maine Real Estate Managers Association
 Maine State Building & Construction Trades
 Maine Workforce Housing LLC, Portland
 Mano en Mano, Milbridge
 Manx Development LLC, Yarmouth
 Massachusetts Bank
 Midcoast Regional Housing Trust
 NBT Bank
 Nickerson & O'Day, Inc., Bangor
 North Haven Sustainable Housing
 Northeast Rental Housing
 Norway Savings Bank
 Old Town Housing Authority
 Ota Atwell CPA, South Portland
 Penobscot General Contractors
 Penquis, Bangor
 People's United Bank
 PHT Construction
 Portland Builders
 Portland Housing Authority
 Preble Street, Portland
 Preservation Management, South Portland
 Prett Flaherty, Portland
 Reason-Up Housing Cooperative, Lewiston
 Realty Resources Management
 Rental Housing Alliance of Southern Maine
 Rick Whiting
 Rumford, Town of
 Sanford Housing Authority
 Scott Simons Architects, Portland
 Sea Coast Management Company, Topsham
 Sham House, Portland
 Silver Street Development Corporation, Portland
 South Portland Housing Authority
 Sparhawk Group, Yarmouth
 St. Germain
 Sunrise Opportunities, Machias
 S.W. Cole Engineering, Gray
 Stanton Company
 TD Bank
 Tedford Housing, Brunswick
 The Cahill Group, Saco
 The Eagle Point Companies, South Portland
 The Housing Foundation
 The Park Danforth, Portland
 Thornton Tomasetti, Portland
 Through These Doors, Portland
 Total Construction Management, Winterport
 TPD Construction Co., Sanford
 United Way of Greater Portland
 Utic, Inc.
 Veterans Inc., Lewiston
 Volunteers of America of Northern ME
 Washington County Assoc for Ret. Citizens
 Westbrook Housing Authority
 Western Maine Community Action, E. Wilton
 Weston Scott Architects
 Wishcamper Companies, Portland
 WKC & Associates
 Wright-Ryan Construction, Portland
 Yarmouth Housing Collaborative
 Year-Round Housing Corp., Long Island
 York County Community Action, Sanford
 York Housing Authority
 Zachau Construction, Freeport
 Zero Energy Design

Joint Standing Committee on Housing & Economic Development

Testimony of Laura Mitchell, Executive Director, Maine Affordable Housing Coalition

in favor of LD128 – An Act to Support Permitting of Certain Multifamily Housing Developments

Under the Site Location of Development Laws, Sponsored by Senator Teresa Pierce.

Hello, Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development.

My name is Laura Mitchell. I am the Executive Director of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition. I spent half my childhood in public housing and have a masters in environmental science. This bill combines two of my passions – homes for all Maine people, and saving Maine’s natural integrity.

The Maine Affordable Housing Coalition is a nonprofit with 140 member organizations working to create and preserve affordable homes in our state. We support LD128 to streamline Maine’s permitting of multifamily housing that is currently adding unnecessary red tape, time and cost to building vital affordable housing. In 2023, the State commissioned a housing study that stated that Maine needs 80,000 new homes by 2030. This year, the State shared a roadmap to meeting that goal. Streamlining processes was the number one priority.

Here are three things what we know from our member’s experiences working through DEP approval processes that we believe highlight the need for streamline state funded affordable housing:

1. Even with lengthy DEP defined timelines for review and approvals (195 days), projects get stuck in limbo often adding up to a year in carrying costs and construction price increases of 5-10%. The state and towns see lost or delayed tax revenue from extended timelines, and the delays dilute the state investment into these housing projects.
2. After DEP approval, any minor changes such as name of ownership or simplifying the project scope for less impact can have 6 month to 1 year delays that have led to other funding source timelines passing and backing out. This has resulted in much needed affordable housing projects with years of planning getting scrapped.
3. DEP review requirements actually incentivize building affordable housing in green space rather than previously developed areas on water and sewer – which is completely counter to the critical environmental values these processes should foster. Further, the law rewards building less housing on larger lots.
4. A lack of clarity on soil management on previously developed sites is unnecessarily filling up Maine’s solid waste facilities with non-hazardous soils at extremely high cost, or adding a year or more to project timelines.

While LD128 will help address some aspects of the inefficiencies and contradictions in the DEP process, MAHC would like to highlight additional areas for rulemaking improvement:

1. Institute an expedited review for affordable housing projects – particularly with state funding
2. Increase the 4 acre threshold for review and apply different review metrics for housing in a town’s growth zones with water, sewer or busline, that doesn’t have significant habitat impacts.
3. Increase fees to support DEP staffing. Similar to elevator inspector fees increase.
4. Allow third party reviews by approved engineering firms. Similar to Historic Review.
5. Add an amendment review period limit. New applications have a long 195 day review, but amendments have no required review time and can lead to significantly longer wait times.
6. Add a directive to make soils review more efficient on previously developed sites.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in favor of LD128 and your consideration of encouraging deeper rulemaking improvements to encourage affordable housing in Maine.