



Marc Malon

PO Box 24

Biddeford, ME 04005

Phone: (207) 200-6376

Marc.Malon@legislature.maine.gov

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION

AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: MAINE RELAY 711

March 25, 2025

Testimony of Rep. Marc Malon introducing

LD 970, An Act to Prioritize Affordable Housing by Expediting Reviews for Affordable Housing Projects Applying for Funding from the Maine State Housing Authority

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development

Senator Curry, Representative Gere and esteemed colleagues on the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development, I am Marc Malon, and I represent House District 133, which is part of the great City of Biddeford. I am here today to present **LD 970, An Act to Prioritize Affordable Housing by Expediting Reviews for Affordable Housing Projects Applying for Funding from the Maine State Housing Authority.**

This committee has heard and will continue to hear bills addressing the housing crisis from different angles. The angle LD 970 seeks to address is the overly long review process projects seeking Maine Housing funding or credits face, causing delays and adding costs to potentially valuable projects. Obviously, when there are legitimate questions about a project, these questions should be investigated and thoroughly reviewed. But often, the delays are simply administrative and unnecessarily slow the pace with which we need to be building new housing units. In response, I am proposing a “shot clock” on these reviews.

The bill can be broken down into two parts: one would expedite the review process by placing a time limit – the “shot clock” – on the Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) reviews of permits and Site Location of Development applications for projects seeking Maine Housing funding or credits. The review must happen within 30 days, or the project will be approved. However, if DEP requests more information the clock will be paused until the request is satisfied. Often these projects have already been approved at the municipal level. None of this is to say that DEP must rubber stamp the review – if legitimate concerns arise, everything pauses and if concerns are not addressed, they can still deny the application.

The second part of the bill institutes a similar shot clock for municipalities – directing the municipal licensing authority to provide notice to the applicant for completeness within 30 days,

and if no notice is provided, the project is deemed complete. After the application is complete, the licensing authority must approve or disapprove the site plan within 120 days. Much like the first part of the bill, there are many mechanisms to pause the shot clock, including requests for more information and/or to have the applicant address legitimate concerns. Again, nothing in this bill forces a municipality to approve a project. It simply seeks to ensure that a decision is made and that there is clarity about the disposition of a housing project.

I fully recognize that instituting a shot clock as this bill proposes may cause some concerns at both the municipal and state level. The bill is structured so that parts can be removed if the committee desires. However, I do believe it is worth discussing in full the unnecessary delays that worthy projects face and ways in which we can expedite needed housing development. You will hear testimony following me discussing the impacts these delays can have. I am open-minded about the best way to address this problem and am optimistic that this Committee is up to the task of figuring out the best path forward.

Thank you for your time – I am happy to take any questions.