

Joint Standing Committee on Housing & Economic Development

Testimony of Housing Justice Maine

March 25th, 2025

*In favor of LD970 - An Act to Prioritize Affordable Housing by Expediting Reviews for Affordable Housing Projects Applying for Funding from the Maine State Housing Authority
Sponsored by Rep. Malon*

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

My name is Nyawal Lia. I am the statewide coordinator for Housing Justice Maine, a statewide housing coalition that believes housing is a human right. HJM prioritizes actions and policies that support housing as a human right and empower those residents most deeply impacted by an oppressive housing system.

As you know, Maine is under extreme pressure to provide housing that is safe and affordable for all Maine people. **More housing is the solution to many of Maine's challenges. In recent years, unprecedented investments in building affordable housing have been made. Yet these projects get caught up in multiple years of approval processes at the municipal and state level. These delays increase costs, water down the investment the state is making and leaves more Maine people without access to housing.**

We support LD970 to streamline Maine's permitting of state funded affordable housing that is currently adding unnecessary red tape, time and cost to building affordable housing in Maine. The State commissioned a housing study with HR&A in 2023 that stated that Maine needs 80,000 new homes by 2030. This year, HR&A shared a roadmap to meeting that goal. Streamlining processes was HR&A's number one priority and within that.

LD970 provides simple, consistent, transparent accountability for all stakeholders involved in meeting Maine's housing goals. Maine's investments in building multifamily affordable housing should be used in the most efficient manner possible. Right now, time, money and resources are being wasted on burdensome permitting procedures. For these reasons, we urge you to please move LD970 "ought to pass."

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

[Nyawal Lia, Housing Justice Maine, nyawal@mainepeoplesalliance.org]