

**Testimony in Support of
LD 1132, An Act to Further Protect Low-impact Landscaping
Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary
April 4, 2025**

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and Esteemed Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Judiciary.

I am Mary Emily Bussey, and I am here to testify enthusiastically in favor of LD 1132. As others have explained, the original bill LD 649 did not apply to condominiums in which all of the property surrounding a unit is a common element, as it is in my development in Brunswick, Maine.

I am a retired physician. My husband grew up in Maine, and we moved to an old farmhouse on the Cathance River in Bowdoinham when we retired. After my husband died of cancer in 2018, I was unable to keep up with an aging farmhouse and the property.

I was told by the realtor selling units in my development that I could have a garden of my choice. So I took a large portion of my life savings to buy a home here, looking forward to having an herb garden and other perennials in a space that I could manage. I understood that the condominium association would perform gardening tasks such as mowing, edging, trimming of trees and shrubs.

I was not told that the condominium association used an extensive array of pesticides to maintain the grounds. I also was not told that the condominium association had very conventional standards of taste and controlled the types of plants I was allowed to place. I later was told that any perennials which I planted would have to be removed when I sold my unit. I was told after I purchased my unit that I could not opt out of pesticides unless I took over all gardening maintenance. And I could not opt out of pesticides on my lawn. Even though I would be maintaining my beds, there would be no reduction in my monthly assessment. The Board and Property Manager refused to discuss my concerns.

I realize that not everyone is opposed to nonorganic horticultural chemicals, but my medical knowledge and experience with cancer has given me a very strong aversion to pesticide use in my vicinity. I truly fear for my health. I used to enjoy bird watching in Bowdoinham, but because of the potential toxicity of the agents used where I live, I have taken down my bird feeders after reading in the ornithological literature that intake of even small amounts of these chemicals will kill the birds. I have read in veterinary literature that the rapid increase in cancer in dogs and cats is thought to be caused by exposure to pesticides. I am very

afraid for the health of my pets. I literally fear walking out my front door or opening my windows during the months when the chemicals are spread. Because of this I am seriously considering moving away from this development long before I had planned.

I would be extremely grateful if the legislature allowed me to have control over the small slice of land immediately around my home. I only want to be able to garden and open my windows without fear. I want to be able to walk my dogs around my unit without worrying that they will develop cancer. I want to enjoy native plants and wildlife without worrying about harm to the environment.

Thank you President Daughtry for introducing and amending this important piece of legislation. And thank you all for your participation and attention to my concerns.