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STATE OF MAINE  
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC  
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COMMISSIONER

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AND  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

IN SUPPORT OF LD 1184

An Act to Require Municipal Reporting on Residential Building Permits, Dwelling Units Permitted  
and Demolished and Certificates of Occupancy Issued

April 8, 2025

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development, my name is Hilary Gove. I am one of the two Housing Opportunity Program Coordinators within the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). I am speaking today in support of LD 1184, An Act to Require Municipal Reporting on Residential Building Permits, Dwelling Units Permitted and Demolished and Certificates of Occupancy Issued.

This bill requires municipalities to report housing data, including building permits, demolition permits, and certificates of occupancy to DECD on an annual basis, for use by the Housing Opportunity Program. We support this bill because improved methods of collecting housing data is essential for tracking housing production and progress towards the State's housing goals.

Currently, there is not a standardized method for tracking housing production data in Maine. Housing production on the state and county-level is estimated by relying on U.S. Census Bureau building permit data that is voluntarily submitted by municipalities. Relying on this building permit data is not an exact measure of housing production because not all reported building permits for housing units result in completed housing units. Furthermore, not all Maine municipalities collect and report building permit data to the US Census Bureau, resulting in gaps in the data.

By requiring municipalities to collect and report on building permit, certificate of occupancy, and demolition data on an annual basis, Maine will have a more precise picture of housing production from year to year.

We suggest amending this legislation in three ways. The first is to require that municipalities provide annual reports on housing data to the Housing Opportunity Program, instead of DECD. This amendment will ensure that the Housing Opportunity Program and the department it exists under will oversee the reporting.

The second amendment is to include an annual deadline for municipal report submission to the Housing Opportunity Program. We suggest January 31st of each year.

The final amendment is to include language that the Housing Opportunity Program may contract with regional planning organizations or other entities to assist municipalities with the collection and reporting of housing data. Working in coordination with regional organizations is essential for the



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Housing Opportunity Program to provide notice to municipalities about data reporting and to ensure data is uniformly reported by each municipality.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions now or at the work session.