

Testimony of Patrick Woodcock
Before the Joint Standing Committees on Housing and Economic Development
In Support of L.D. 1247
“An Act to Restrict Municipal Ordinance Requirements
Regarding Housing Developments.”
April 22, 2025

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and members of Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development, my name is Patrick Woodcock. I am here on behalf of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, representing a network of 5,000+ small to large businesses. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on L.D. 1247, “An Act to Restrict Municipal Ordinance Requirements Regarding Housing Developments.” I want to thank Representative Gere for bringing this legislation forward and working to unlock housing development.

Section 2 of the bill would limit municipal requirements of minimum sized lots where a municipality is currently served by public water or sewer systems to 5,000 square feet. Last week, more than 20 organizations wrote to legislative leaders encouraging the Legislature to develop these types of limits with a recommendation of 1 acre for rural areas and .5 acres in designated growth areas or areas with existing water and sewer service.

Earlier this year, HR&A recommended that the Legislature consider this type of statewide standard albeit as part of a statewide incentive program. Specifically, recommendation 2.3 includes the recommendation that municipalities be rewarded if they “cap minimum lot sizes at 0.5 acres in designated growth areas or in areas with public water and sewer to encourage density and efficient land use.

We certainly respect that every community is unique and there should generally be discretion in local zoning decisions, but minimum statewide standards would create consistency, promote density, and unlock housing development in our state. We are also concerned that the requirement of minimum sized limits has been used as an abuse of municipal authority to simply deny housing development.

The Maine State Chamber of Commerce believes this bill is a key component of an overall housing policy that lowers the costs and open additional land for housing development. We encourage the Committee to support L.D. 1247.