

Testimony Of Priscilla Ngaliema
Committee on Housing and Economic Development
LD 1385 “An Act to Consider Municipalities Meeting Regional Housing Goals in Awarding
Transportation Grants”
Apr 24, 2025

Senator Curry of Oxford, Representative Gere of Brunswick, and members of the committee on housing and economic development, my name is Priscilla Ngaliema. I am an intern at the Maine Chamber of Commerce, and I am here on behalf of the organization and have been working specifically on housing issues this semester.

This bill provides a simple but powerful shift in how our state awards special transportation grants: by requiring the Department of Transportation to consider a municipality’s past actions and future plans towards meeting regional housing production goals. The legislation is consistent with Recommendation 2.3 of the HR&A report and believe it would encourage municipalities to become partners with the state in achieving our state housing goals.

This connection between housing and transportation planning is long overdue. Maine is facing a housing crisis that affects residents across age groups, income levels, and geographic location. State funding for transportation has the power to help our cities long-term growth and sustainability. By combining these two policy areas, we can make sure that public resources represent our shared goals of equity, access, and affordability.

Municipalities are encouraged by LD 1385 to think about active and smart solutions instead of addressing the present housing shortage. Pushing others to create different plans that benefit present and future residents, it also recognizes those who have made significant efforts to reach housing production goals.

By passing this legislation, it shows that housing is connected to other important issues, like transportation. It is a great foundation for economic growth, social stability, and community well-being.

The Chamber would recommend some additional direction to the Executive Branch if this legislation at the work session. Specifically, we would recommend that the Governor’s Office of Policy, Innovation, & the Future (GOPIF) annually issue a list of municipalities that are housing leaders and it be clearly established how a municipality can attain this status. The Legislature may want to also consider exempting small communities (less than 2,000 people) and held harmless in any discretionary grant considerations.

Thank you for your time

Sincerely,
Priscilla Ngaliema