



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

MICHAEL DUGUAY
COMMISSIONER

May 2, 2025

**Testimony of Commissioner Michael Duguay
LD 1637 – An Act to Reform the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority
Committee on Housing and Economic Development**

Senator Curry, Representative Gere and members of the Committee on Housing and Economic Development, my name is Mike Duguay and I am the Commissioner of the Department of Economic and Community Development. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify in support of, *LD 1637, An Act to Reform the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority (MRRA)*. I commend the Brunswick Legislative Delegation for proposing structural reforms to increase local representation and oversight of MRRA's activities. Expanding the board to include more direct representation from the Town of Brunswick, reflects a strong and welcome commitment to transparency, diversity of thought, and community inclusion.

However, the Department has identified some concerns.

Section 4 of the bill as written would appear to authorize the Chair of the Brunswick Town Council to make a direct appointment to the Authority. To avoid a conflict with the Governor's appointment authority under the Article V of the Maine Constitution, this provision should be amended to make clear that the Governor appoints this member from a list of candidates recommended by the Chair of the Town Council.

We must also identify that Section 5 of the bill, which would repeal the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority's coverage under the Maine Tort Claims Act and remove essential liability protections for its board members and staff causes concern.

Tort immunity is not immunity from accountability. Trustees are still subject to removal, audits, public scrutiny, and legislative oversight. The current protections simply ensure that those acting in good faith and within the scope of their duties are shielded from personal lawsuits stemming from policy decisions made in the public interest.

Ultimately, expanding the board while removing legal safeguards sends mixed signals. We may succeed in making the board more representative, only to discourage qualified individuals from serving.



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We understand the bill sponsor has proposed an amendment to strike this section, and we are grateful for her thoughtful consideration.

We continue to believe that this legislation – aimed at increasing transparency and improving local representation for such a significant project – is a positive step toward fostering growth in Brunswick and its surrounding areas.

Thank you for your time and consideration.