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Testimony of Rep. Sue Salisbury as a co-sponsor of

LD 1751, An Act to Improve the Growth Management Program Law

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development Committee

Senator Curry, Representative Gere and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development, I am Sue Salisbury, and I represent House District 128, which includes part of Westbrook. I am here today to testify as a co-sponsor of **LD 1751, An Act to Improve the Growth Management Program Law**.

My time in the 131st Legislature was my first exposure to growth management plans. If I am being totally honest, it was not something that I ever wanted to learn about, and I came to the conversation very reluctantly. Thankfully, pulling me along was the city of Westbrook's Director of Planning and Codes, Jennie Franceschi. Throughout the session, she shared concerns about LD 1976 and how it would impact Westbrook. Fast forward to the fall of 2024, and concerns were mounting about the implementation of the statute, and I realized that this would not work for Westbrook, but I did not know the best way forward. I wanted to know what the professionals thought, what the Maine Association of Planners' growth management plans entailed, and how to best implement these ideas.

LD 1751 holds the answer to these questions; that is why I became a cosponsor of LD 1751 and urge this committee to support the bill. This bill was created by the subject matter experts, and it will provide municipalities time and cost saving measures, help them avoid legal challenges and provide process flexibility across the state, with an emphasis on rural Maine.

Municipalities need to avoid unmanaged growth, especially during these uncertain times. We need to protect our heritage industries, farmlands, working waterfronts and open spaces. These comprehensive plans are the means by which cities and towns can balance their goals for housing, social and economic growth by planning for and managing this growth in a responsible, thoughtful manner.

This bill does a variety of things, but what stands out to me is the ability to streamline state review timelines, which will allow each municipality to conduct planning board reviews and allow for consistency with Maine's Climate Action Plan.

Thank you for your consideration of this important bill. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.