MAINE OFFICE OF

Community Affairs

Testimony of the Maine Office of Community Affairs
Director Samantha Horn
January 8, 2026

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development
In Support of LD 1999 An Act to Exclude Agricultural Leases from the Definition of "Subdivision"
Under the Planning and Land Use Regulation Laws

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and distinguished Members of the joint standing committee on Housing and Economic Development, my name is Samantha Horn, Director of the Maine Office of Community Affairs. I am testifying in support of LD 1999 An Act to Exclude Agricultural Leases from the Definition of "Subdivision" Under the Planning and Land Use Regulation Laws as proposed to be amended by the sponsor.

The Maine Office of Community Affairs, or MOCA, was created in 2024 to foster communication and partnerships between the State and communities in this State. Our charge is to engage with municipalities, tribal governments and regional councils to provide coordinated and efficient planning, technical assistance and financial support to better plan for challenges, pursue solutions and create stronger, more resilient communities.

We agree with the sponsor's intent to make it clear that agricultural leases should not be subject to subdivision law. We were concerned with the original language because it would have provided an exemption to the subdivision laws for permanent residential dwellings on agricultural land. While we agree that worker housing is an important issue, this particular solution was overly broad and provided a loophole for residential development on agricultural land that would most likely turn into non-worker housing. We would like to encourage development of permanent housing – for workers and for all – but would be concerned about incentivizing rapid build-out on top of working agricultural lands.

The sponsor's proposed amendment to remove the reference to dwellings solves the problem, and we support the bill with that amendment. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.