



**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 1995 An Act to Require the Maine Office of Community Affairs to Establish a Technical Assistance Materials Hub (Department Bill)**

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 1995, An Act to Require the Maine Office of Community Affairs to Establish a Technical Assistance Materials Hub.

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.

Communities across Maine are contending with increasingly complex challenges including housing shortages, climate effects from extreme storms, and planning for new land uses that pose unique challenges. To help communities navigate, MOCA proposes to create a Technical Assistance hub. This resource hub will provide a user-friendly searchable database for a variety of technical assistance materials to assist communities, policymakers and the public with planning and implementation efforts. Currently, the technical assistance materials that exist are spread across many different state government agencies and community partner websites, which is a source of frustration for community staff and volunteers and the service providers who assist communities. The hub would create a one-stop shop for up-to-date resources.

It will be a searchable database of land use planning, climate, housing, and other technical assistance resources that are organized by subject matter. The type of resources we intend to include are:

- Assessments, plans, and strategies
- Communication or education materials

- Planning and/or policy guidance
- Data, tools, research
- Case studies, projects, or examples

Materials would come from the MOCA programs and from federal, state, regional, nonprofit, industry, academic, and local partners.

We have already begun background work in anticipation of this project. In 2025 MOCA contracted with the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission to inventory land use planning and housing technical assistance documents from state, regional, and local partners. With a grant from the Maine Community Foundation, we are continuing that work by hiring a part-time contracted project manager for four months to expand and prioritize the inventory of resources, identify high-priority additional resources that should be created, and find out from potential users what features they most need from this hub.

We are particularly interested in legislative support for this concept so we can document for future legislatures and Administrations that this is a key need and so we can explain to our partners who will contribute to this tool that the product will be durable and their time and efforts are well-spent.

For these reasons, I respectfully request your support for LD 1995. Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.