

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am a property owner in Big Lake Township, Maine, and I am writing to submit written testimony regarding the recent and substantial increase in property taxes in the unorganized territory.

Following the most recent revaluation in 2025, my camp's assessed value increased to 220% of its 2024 value. This new valuation exceeds what I believe to be the fair market value for comparable properties in our area. As a result, my property tax bill increased dramatically, creating a financial burden that is difficult to absorb and impossible to predict from year to year.

I understand and accept that property values change over time, and I am willing to pay my fair share. However, increases of this magnitude, particularly when they appear disconnected from actual market conditions, raise serious concerns about fairness and consistency in the valuation process. For many property owners in the unorganized territories, these sudden increases threaten the ability to hold onto long-owned family properties.

I was encouraged to learn that the Legislature is considering reforms to property taxation in Maine's unorganized territories. I am concerned, however, by suggestions that any relief be limited only to primary residences. Many properties in the unorganized territories, including camps and seasonal homes, are not speculative investments but family properties that have been held and cared for over many years. Owners of these properties often have deep ties to the area and contribute to local economies. Limiting relief only to primary residences would exclude many ordinary Mainers who are also being affected by these sharp and sudden valuation increases.

I respectfully urge the Committee to consider reforms that provide greater predictability, transparency, and stability in future valuations in addition to limitations on mill rate increases, so property owners are not subjected to repeated and extreme tax increases.

Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to the people of Maine.

Sincerely,
Wesla Ranalli
Big Lake Twp.