

From: Alise DeMaris <alisedemaris@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 13, 2026 10:34 PM
To: Grohoski, Nicole <Nicole.Grohoski@legislature.maine.gov>
Subject: Written testimony regarding unorganized territory property tax

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This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.

Dear Senator Grohoski,

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

In March 2023, my family and I purchased our property for \$260,000. Prior to the 2025 revaluation, the combined assessed value of the two tax lots was \$236,830. Following the revaluation, that assessment increased to \$467,230, an increase of 97% from the prior year and approximately 80% above the fair market purchase price from just two years earlier. Unsurprisingly, my property tax bill also increased substantially, rising by 50% from 2024. I requested an abatement but was granted only a modest reduction, and I am currently appealing that decision before the Washington County Commissioners.

Although I now live in Standish, I am not a newcomer to the area. I lived in Big Lake Township for the first 21 years of my life, and my grandmother, parents, and siblings all live there today. Our property is a family camp that we use as a second home during the summer months, allowing us to remain connected to our family and to pass along to our children the Maine community and way of life in which I was raised.

Given my experience disputing the state tax assessor's valuation and the difficulty of obtaining meaningful relief, I was encouraged to learn that the Legislature is considering reforms to property taxation in Maine's unorganized territories. However, I am concerned by suggestions that relief be limited only to primary residences. In my experience, many camps in the unorganized territories are not luxury investments, but long-held family properties owned by ordinary Mainers with deep ties to these communities. Seasonal property owners also contribute significantly to local economies while using relatively few public services, particularly education. Furthermore, many seasonal properties in our unorganized territories, including my own, are unsuitable for year-round habitation.

I was also struck by the fact that recent tax increases in Big Lake Township appear to stem primarily from dramatic valuation changes, particularly for waterfront properties, rather than from the mill rate, which actually decreased. I respectfully ask you to consider whether this legislation could be structured in a way that prevents similar valuation-driven

shocks in future revaluations, so property owners are not repeatedly subjected to sudden and unsustainable tax increases.

I urge you to support meaningful property tax reform in Maine's unorganized territories that provides predictability and fairness for all property owners. Thank you for your time, consideration, and service to our state.

Sincerely,
Alise DeMaris