



TOWN OF KENNEBUNKPORT, MAINE

- INCORPORATED 1653 -

Dear Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development:

On behalf of the Kennebunkport Selectboard, I am writing in response to the Legislature's request for Public Hearing input on the issue of LD-1829/LD-2173. The Selectboard of Kennebunkport, ME, represents residents' wishes to convey the following.

Our town has implemented growth and expansion based on our land use ordinances, which are guided by our Comprehensive Plan, which has been approved by our residents and the State. This allows us to plan and address growth in concert with residential, business, tourist, land & coastal preservation.

We understand and support the intent of LD 1829 law, and the corresponding LD 2173 fix it bill: however, we do not believe the intended goal of advancing the development of affordable workforce housing will be achieved in our town.

Kennebunkport is a small coastal town, consisting of approximately 3,600 full-time residents, which expands to over 12,000 in the summer season. One of the more challenging goals we face is to maintain a year-round community. We fully recognize that increasing the availability of workforce housing is a critical, important, and vital element in meeting this challenge. Therefore, based on a Town-funded 2018 housing study, we developed a non-profit housing trust that has been successfully focused on affordable workforce housing development. Given the fact that we are a small coastal tourist town with limited infrastructure, it is this purpose-driven solution to housing development that will work best in our community. In our town, to just add more housing without a focus on affordability will create more market-rate second homes and move us further into a pure seasonal community. The consequences of this type of density for towns like ours will most likely be devastating and irreversible.

Maine is made up of very diverse communities. A one-size-fits-all approach to affordable workforce housing will not work in Kennebunkport. Towns must be able to work and develop housing growth in alignment with their infrastructure, roads, services, and areas where they can and cannot expand.

We respectfully ask the committee to add the following to the fix it Bill LD2173:

"For Coastal towns with less than 6000 full time residents, LD1829 will not apply. Rather, those towns' growth will be guided by their Land Use Ordinances. These towns will continue to work on solutions for affordable workforce housing that are suitable for their communities."

Respectively,

Jon Dykstra, Chair
Kennebunkport Selectboard