

Good afternoon members of the Committee on Housing and Economic Development,

I am writing to share feedback on Bill 2173, An Act to Update the Laws Regarding Housing Developments and Accessory Dwelling Units. First, I want to acknowledge the well-intended goals behind LD 1829 and the broader effort to expand housing options for Maine families while attracting workers to Maine. The need for housing options and a robust workforce is real, and I appreciate the Legislature's commitment to addressing it.

The impacts of Maine's shrinking workforce are evident across the state, and Scarborough is no exception. However, Scarborough has long been a leader in creating housing opportunities in Maine. By consistently planning for growth and supporting development, Scarborough has seen a steady population increase, growing by more than 20% between 2010 and 2020, and it remains one of the fastest-growing communities in the state.

This rapid growth comes with very real infrastructure concerns. Our schools have been undersized for years, leading to a recently passed referendum for a \$140 million project to address longstanding capacity challenges. Our roads are heavily traveled, resulting in continuous congestion. Our natural resources are strained. And our residents are increasingly weary of the fiscal impacts that accompany this pace of growth.

In Scarborough, we enjoy a beautiful stretch of beaches, and our coastal character shapes both our identity and our housing market. For a community like ours, I suspect that increased density would translate into more high-dollar and rental properties rather than the affordable housing the legislation aims to encourage. This dynamic makes it unlikely that the bill, as written, will achieve its intended outcomes in communities with similar market pressures.

I attended the Scarborough Town Council's recent workshop with our local elected officials and Speaker Ryan Fecteau, and I was heartened to hear that LD 2173 was in development. However, after reviewing the bill in its final form, I was disappointed to see that several key elements do not reflect the real concerns discussed during that meeting.

I respectfully ask you to return to the table and reconsider LD 2173. On a personal level, I would encourage you to explore exemptions or alternative pathways for communities that have already made significant contributions to Maine's growth. I am concerned that, as written, this unfunded mandate will concentrate additional growth and infrastructure pressure on communities like Scarborough, while leaving other areas of the state without the development they need to thrive.

I appreciate your consideration of these concerns and hope you will revisit LD 2173 with the needs of all Maine communities in mind.

Sincerely,

Shannon Lindstrom