

March 6, 2025

Re: *LD 427 An Act to Prohibit Mandatory Parking Space Minimums in State and Municipal Building Codes*

Greetings Senator Curry, Representative Gere and Members of the Committee on Housing and Economic Development,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed bill that would prohibit the State or municipalities from imposing minimum parking requirements for new developments, land use, or occupancy of land or buildings. While the bill allows for parking recommendations, removing the ability to enforce reasonable minimum parking standards would have significant negative consequences for municipalities across Maine.

Municipalities are best positioned to determine parking needs based on local conditions, including population density, land use patterns, and economic activity. This bill strips municipalities of a critical tool for ensuring orderly development, public safety, and economic vitality. While we appreciate the support of businesses in our state and recognize that there are areas where parking can be a concern, however this proposal uses a sledgehammer when a scalpel is needed.

The following are some key concerns regarding this proposal:

1. Increased Traffic Congestion and Safety Concerns

- ❖ Without minimum parking requirements, new developments could drastically underestimate parking needs, leading to an increase in vehicles illegally parked on streets, in fire lanes, and in residential areas.
- ❖ This creates serious traffic hazards by obstructing sightlines, impeding emergency response vehicles, and increasing congestion.

2. Negative Impact on Local Businesses and Economic Growth

- ❖ Small businesses and commercial districts rely on adequate parking to attract customers. If businesses are unable to provide sufficient parking, consumers will go elsewhere, negatively impacting local economies.
- ❖ Developers may choose to provide minimal or no parking to cut costs, shifting the burden onto municipalities and existing businesses, which may not have the capacity to absorb additional parking demand.

### 3. Burden on Residential Neighborhoods

- ❖ A lack of required parking for multi-family housing and commercial developments will force overflow parking into surrounding neighborhoods, creating disputes between residents and businesses.
- ❖ This particularly affects communities with older infrastructure and narrow streets, where on-street parking is already limited.

### 4. Loss of Local Control and One-Size-Fits-All Approach

- ❖ Parking needs vary significantly across Maine, from rural towns to urban centers. A blanket prohibition on parking requirements disregards the unique needs of each municipality.
- ❖ Municipal governments should have the ability to determine appropriate parking standards based on their specific needs, rather than being forced into a one-size-fits-all state mandate.

### 5. Shifting Costs and Responsibilities to Municipalities

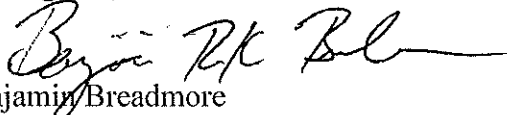
- ❖ Without required parking, municipalities will bear the burden of providing and maintaining public parking infrastructure to accommodate overflow demand.
- ❖ Taxpayers could ultimately foot the bill for increased parking enforcement, road maintenance, and the construction of additional public parking facilities.

While we support efforts to promote walkability and smart growth, eliminating minimum parking requirements outright is a misguided and impractical approach. Municipalities need the flexibility to set policies that work for their unique communities rather than being stripped of a critical planning tool.

I strongly urge lawmakers to reconsider this proposal and allow municipalities to retain their authority to set reasonable parking requirements.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,



Benjamin Breadmore  
Town Manager & Chief Building Official  
Town of Holden, Maine