



BATH
MAINE *City of Ships*

OFFICE of PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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Testimony, on behalf of the City of Bath

In Support of LD 1751, "An Act to Improve the Growth Management Program Laws"

Dear Senator Chip Curry, Representative Teri Gere, and Honorable Members of the Committee on Housing and Economic Development,

My name is Jennifer Curtis, and I'm commenting as the Director of Planning for the City of Bath, Maine. Bath is in support of this resolve. Bath also had the honor of being awarded "Plan of the Year" in 2024, by the Maine Association of Planners, (MAP) for the Bath Comprehensive Plan adopted in November 2023.

Last year, I signed on to the letter from the MAP opposing LD 1976, primarily on the grounds that it did not address known issues (such as the need to reduce the administrative burden of the comprehensive planning process, and encourage more regional planning), and created new requirements that could hinder housing and commercial projects and create new administrative burdens without clear agreed-upon benefits. Because we planners recognize the value in showing up for our communities to do the work to make things better, rather than just complaining – the Maine Association of Planners Legislative Committee formed a subcommittee - ably led by Jennie Franceschi - to engage in a thorough and fair bill-creation process, to produce a version of 1976 that preserved portions that could be beneficial and would not unfairly burden smaller municipalities, made some common-sense targeted changes, and was created with transparency and a broad spectrum of input, with ample opportunity for review and input by key stakeholders. First and foremost, this bill will do no harm, and additionally, it will make the process of comprehensive planning more simple and clear. It will support comprehensive planning by making it less of a complex never-ending chore, so that it may be completed more often.

Importantly, Rep. Roberts' bill will save communities from needing to perform unnecessary and cumbersome sections of inventory for Comprehensive Planning by revising the current Inventory requirements, exchanging the one-size-fits-all thirteen topic areas with a tiered framework based on a community's capacity. It supports the use of more easily accessible state data and regional planning resources, clarifies what needs to be in a future land use plan, and standardizes definitions and references. **Carried forward it would provide relief from administrative burden, and do no harm.**

Thank you for your time. I welcome your questions about intent and process.

Sincerely,

Jenn Curtis, MMPM, AICP
Director of Planning, City of Bath, Maine