

WRITTEN TESTIMONY PROVIDED

OUGHT TO PASS

LD 1751 “An Act to Improve the Growth Management Program Laws”

DATE OF HEARING: Thursday, May 8 2025

Honorable Senator Curry, Honorable Representative Gere, and Distinguished Members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee:

My name is Keri Ouellette, I have been a planner for 20 years. As a planning consultant in Maine for the past four years I have assisted several communities in developing their comprehensive plans. Comprehensive Planning is important because it provides a framework for growth and decision making. When communities experience significant change or changes in leadership, the comprehensive plan can provide stability in guiding important policy decisions that are grounded in the values of the community.

Many communities delay this important planning process because of the time and cost involved. LD 1751 improves Comprehensive Planning by decreasing the municipal burden and cost while preserving the essential comprehensive analysis of a community. It allows a municipality to right-size this process to fit the community’s capacity and need through a tiered framework. It enables and directs rulemaking to address existing known issues in Rule and provide guidance on strategies by place type to enable “floor model” comp plans that communities can customize from rather than starting from scratch.

Greater flexibility in this process will allow communities to determine, on their own, the most appropriate methods and strategies to support State goals and achieve the community’s vision. Community members are often skeptical of the current top-down approach. Encouraging a community-led approach will result in greater buy-in from community members, and as a result, better comprehensive planning overall.