

Testimony in Support of LD 1751 “An Act to Improve the Growth Management Law”

DATE OF HEARING: Thursday, May 8, 2025

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

My name is Paul Schumacher and I am a “semi” retired Maine Planner now providing part time land use and economic development services to various organizations in southern Maine. I was also an Executive Director at the Southern Maine Planning and Development Commission for over 25 years. I am writing to you now in support of LD 1751.

As an individual who wrote and later oversaw a staff of planners writing dozens of comprehensive plans over my career, I can surely say that the Growth Management Act is in need of revision. I strongly support and applaud the Committees attempt to do so.

LD 1751 provides the most appropriate vehicle for those much needed changes. First and foremost, this bill has been created with input from the people who know the most about growth management in the state of Maine – the local and regional land use planning community and municipal planning consultants. In my time, I have not seen a piece of legislation that received more insight, input and detail from all regions of the state and experienced professionals than this proposed revision to the GMA. After spending parts of a career attempting to take state legislation and guidance and implement that legislation on the local level, I find that extremely important and, in fact, inspiring.

Why do I place so much importance on that input? With that practitioner input from the planning community in Maine, this bill revises the law to:

1. Reduce the heavy reliance on data collection and inventory;
2. Shortens the time frames for completion;
3. Provides flexibility for communities with limited or no staff and allows for variation in the complexity of the plans;
4. Does not require a “one size fits all” process.
5. Maintains the clarity of what “implementation” should look like – the most important part of the plan.

Clearly, comprehensive planning in Maine needs to be more accessible to all communities in Maine. It needs to take less time, afford more flexibility based on size of community, all while focusing on achievable outcomes. We tend to forget that the goal of comprehensive planning is not to simply write and approve a plan. **It is to write,**

approve and implement a plan. I believe this new framework and legislation does precisely that.

I am grateful for the hard work you have all put into this and I hope to see it realized with the approval of this LD 1751.

Thank you for your consideration.

Paul Schumacher

South Berwick, Me.