



TOWN OF KENNEBUNKPORT, MAINE  
~ INCORPORATED 1653 ~

Committee on Housing and Economic Development  
Maine State Legislature  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

May 7, 2025

**Subject: Support for LD 1940 – An Act to Revise the Growth Management Program Laws**

Dear Chair Curry and Chair Gere and Esteemed Members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee:

I am writing to express my support for LD 1940 "An Act to Revise the Growth Management Program Laws." I appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony and feedback to aid the committee in reviewing the proposed pieces of legislation that are allowing for much needed reform to the Growth Management Act.

Since inception, Maine planners, residents, and community stakeholders have desired much needed reforms to this important piece of legislation which is the primary visioning tool for communities in land use planning. I can personally attest from my municipal experiences in multiple states that Maine is due to update this law to remove archaic data collection practices and checklists that have burdened communities with years of meetings to complete a large complex publication that ends up sitting on a shelf not being implemented.

In many cases, the complex checklist and tedious practices currently in place make it that municipalities need to hire professional consulting services even when Towns have planning staff. I can attest that during my service to the City of Presque Isle, the comprehensive plan process lasted five years before being adopted stretching through two town planners with interim assistance from the City Manager between planners.

Community visioning and planning should be easily accessible, readable, and implementable for all members of a Town. I appreciate the thoughtful discussion that the committee is undertaking with the public to amend this law to be a relatable and relevant tool in building consensus in a community's visioning process.

As a town planning professional with membership with Maine Association of Planners and GrowSmart Maine, I appreciate both LD 1940 and LD 1751 willingness to strike needed reforms albeit two different ways to reach the same goal. In general, I appreciate the opportunity for public review processes to legislative changes vs. department policy changes which are less transparent to public comment and feedback. I appreciate LD 1751's ability to streamline the comprehensive plan review process by the state.

To aid the committee in reconciling these two bills, I am enclosing a breakdown of both bills that I believe offer positive changes to the existing law that could be used by the committee to reconcile at workshop while also including a breakdown to portions of LD 1940 that I have questions regarding.

Certainly, this is the first step in reforming the state's efforts to help communities in land use planning. I welcome the opportunity for the state and communities to begin discussions regarding adequate investment by the state to fund implementation strategies in comprehensive plans that will aid in addressing state and local goals and objectives in the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to supply a written testimony regarding LD 1940 and to offer general feedback to help the committee in striking the needed reforms to the Growth Management Act. I welcome the opportunity to offer assistance and feedback to the committee if warranted at the workshop committee regarding my experiences in Maine and Pennsylvania municipal planning.

Sincerely,



Galen L. Weibley  
Director of Planning & Development  
Town of Kennebunkport

(Enclosures)

# **Feedback to the Housing & Economic Development Committee**

Prepared by: Galen Weibley

## **Positive Sections of LD 1940**

- **Section 4301 5-B** – Liked the targeted approach to mixed-use development in growth areas
- **Section 4301 5-C** – Appreciate the incorporation of designated growth areas to reference utility infrastructure
- **Section 4301 5-D** – Like the reference to bicycle infrastructure added
- **Section 4301 12-A** – Appreciate the Placetype definition that links characteristics for these areas in a community. While a new term, I hope that the Office of Community Affairs will offer guidance for towns and public to understand these new terms.
- **Section 4312 sub-2, J.** – Clear goal of encouraging coordination between the state agencies, regional councils, municipalities and non-profit organizations
- **Section 4312 sub 3 A-1** – Appreciate the new section to prevent sprawl, develop growth areas for infrastructure, preserve rural character and protect natural resources.
- **Section 4312 sub 3 D-1** Appreciate new goal for linking new affordable housing where jobs and transportation exist to prevent sprawl
- **Section 4312 sub 3 H.** – Appreciate incorporation of agricultural soils and viability of agriculture as part of statewide goals.
- **Section 4312 sub 3 L.** like the link to transportation access for age-friendly communities
- **Section 4312 sub 3 N** Appreciate reference to climate action plan and plan for effects of natural hazards and coastal flooding.
- **Section 4324 sub 3.3** Appreciate better clarity to public participation process
- **Section 4326-A, Subsection 1-4** – Process outlined for public participation, mapping resources, developing needs and goals and implementable strategies
- **Section 4326-A, Subsection 3 Needs Analysis** – I liked the paragraphs on page 12 for mentioning the importance of protecting critical natural resources, water quality and coastal waters and agriculture/forestry. Narrative section for public input received and how it informs the needs listed in the comp plan.

## **Positive Sections of LD 1751**

- **Sections 4301 sub-5-B.G** adding the new term bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure in growth capital investment
- **Sections 4312 sub-3.B** Appreciate adding transportation infrastructure.
- **Sections 4312 sub-3.G** This definition is better defined with the state than LD 1940 for commercial fisheries
- **Section 4324 sub-8.B** This section offers towns without a website greater flexibility in posting public hearing information.
- **Section 4326 sub 5.(A).(4)** Appreciate this provision added to implementation program preventing inappropriate development in floodplains and natural hazard areas.

- **Section 4326 sub 5.(B)** Section highlights the desire of Land Use Policies and ordinances to discourage incompatible development.
- **Section 4347-A sub 2.B** Updates section to remove reference to State Planning Office
- **Section 4347-A sub 3.C(3)** Updates section to remove reference to State Planning Office
- **Section 4347-A sub 3-A.A** Like the streamlined process

### **Questions regarding LD 1940**

- Section 4312 sub 3 B. Question what life cycle costs would be as a factor and how this would be developed by a Town
- Section 4347-A sub 3-A D-1: How can we work to prevent back and forth from the Department and Town where there are disagreements of the state agencies on proposed goals and strategies of a Town? This has been an issue in the past with the review process of comprehensive plans where departments objected to proposed strategies and goals of a town.
- Section 4326-A, Subsection 1 – Inventory and Mapping – I am a huge proponent of mapping as a way to provide ways for the public to understand data and complex issues. My concern is regarding if the state will offer funding to smaller towns who do not have the technical assistance or abilities to map some of the data required to be mapped such as Maine Tree Growth, heritage coastal areas, open space, waterfront protection tax programs, etc.. My solution would be for the state agencies to supply this mapped data for Town's to aid in the comprehensive planning process so that the Towns can focus on designating placetypes and growth areas in their community.