



MAINE AFFORDABLE HOUSING COALITION

Joint Standing Committee on Housing & Economic Development

Testimony of Laura Mitchell, Executive Director, Maine Affordable Housing Coalition, in favor of LD1926- Sponsored by Holly Stover

Hello, Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development. I am Laura Mitchell, executive director of the **Maine Affordable Housing Coalition**. I am testifying in favor of LD1926 on behalf of the coalition, a **nonprofit with 140 member businesses and more than 2,000 individual members**.

This bill is a no cost solution to meeting the need for 40,000+ attainable and available homes for Maine workers making a good wage, but still not enough to afford housing. We all know the demographics our state is facing. We are the oldest state in the nation, and a large percentage of our workforce is going to retire in the next few years. Maine has one of the lowest rates of housing vacancies for open jobs. Homes are where jobs go home to sleep. **Without homes for our workers, the services Maine people have grown accustomed to may not be there** - EMS workers to arrive in an emergency, teachers to lead classrooms, police to keep our streets safe, nurses to keep our hospitals running, waiters to keep restaurants open, and more.

LD 1926 can address the chronic shortage of housing affordable to median income workers. We are at a critical inflection point. Across urban, suburban, and rural communities alike, employers are struggling to recruit and retain workers due to the lack of attainable housing. The people we love, rely on and care about are being priced out of the very communities they serve.

For extremely low income Mainers (seniors on a fixed income, people working minimum wage jobs, etc), financial support is necessary to build homes they can afford. For Maine's workforce that just needs a little lower cost of housing, no cost solutions like LD1926 can be effective.

The bottom line is that housing projects need to be sold or rented at a price that is higher than the cost of developing that housing. Many of the costs to build homes are fixed – they don't change no matter how many homes you are building. Like the cost to put the driveway in, extend utilities, legal fees, permitting, etc. So the home builder needs to earn more money from each unit to cover all the fixed costs as well as the other expenses to construct the homes.

The home builder must then choose - building just a few units and charging a lot of money for each one (luxury housing); or building lots of units that are each offered for a lower rate.

Frequently in Maine, home builders find out they can't put in enough units offered at the lower rate to cover their costs due to limits on density or minimum lot sizes. So the builder has to choose to build luxury housing, a hotel, or no housing development at all.

That's where LD1926 comes in. It allows more units (or decreased lot sizes) if the homes will be rented or sold at an affordable rate. This allows the home builder to move forward covering costs; while also providing affordable housing for Maine workers – at no cost to the state.

Let me be clear: without bold action, Maine's housing shortage will only grow worse. The people who make our communities work—childcare providers, CNAs, school bus drivers—will continue to face untenable commutes, overcrowding, or simply leave the state. This bill is not a silver bullet, but it is an essential step in the right direction. Please support LD 1926 and give Maine communities the tools they need to build housing for the people who keep them running.

3i Housing of Maine
35 Weston Avenue
AARP Maine
ABG Consulting, Gray
Acorn Engineering, Inc.
Allied Cook Construction, Portland
Anew Development LLC, Portland
Apartments for People LLC, Belfast
Archetype Architects, Portland
Associated General Contractors of Maine
Auburn Housing Authority
Augusta Housing Authority
Avesta Housing, Portland
Bangor Area Homeless Shelter
Bangor Housing
Bangor Savings Bank
Bank of New Hampshire, Falmouth
Bath Housing
Bath Savings Institution
Belknap Enterprise
Benchmark Construction, Westbrook
Boston Financial Investment Management
Bowman Constructors, Newport
Brunswick Housing Authority
Camden National Bank
Carpenter Associates
Catholic Charities of Maine
CEI, Brunswick
CH Architecture, Portland
City of Portland Department of Housing
Clark Insurance, Portland
Community Concepts, Lewiston
Community Housing of Maine, Portland
Consignli Construction Co., Inc.
Creative Development Institute, South Freeport
Cooperative Fund of the Northeast
CREA, LLC
Crescent Associates, Westbrook
Cross Financial Corp., Portland
Cumberland County
Dunbar & Brawn Construction
Eaton Peabody Consulting Group, Augusta
Eric Burmeister
Evernorth, Portland
Falmouth, Town of
Fort Fairfield Residential Development Corp.
Four Directions Development Corporation, Orono
Freeport Community Services
Freeport Housing Trust
Furniture Friends
Garnett Construction, Augusta
Gawron Turgeon Architects, Scarborough
Genesis Community Loan Fund, Brunswick
Gorham Savings Bank
Great Falls Construction, Gorham
Grommes Pulaski Consulting LLC, Portland
GrowSmart Maine
Habitat for Humanity of Greater Portland
Habitat for Humanity York County
Hatch Lumber, Casco
Healthy Androscoggin, Lewiston
Herbert Construction
Home Start, Peaks Island
Homeless Voices for Justice, Portland
Housing Foundation, Orono
Housing Initiatives of New England, Portland
Housing Partnership, Portsmouth, NH
Hunt Capital Partners LLC, El Paso, TX
Island Institute, Rockland
Islesboro Affordable Property
Jensen Baird Gardner & Henry, Portland
John Antan, Consultant, Portland
Kaplan Thompson Architects, Portland
Kennebec Savings Bank, Augusta
Kennebec Valley Community Action, Waterville
Kennebunk Savings
KeyBank
Knox County Homeless Coalition
Lake City Investments, LLC
Landry/French Construction, Scarborough
Laudelle Consulting, LLC, Augusta
Lassel Architects, South Berwick
LB Development Partners, Portland
LeadingAge Maine & New Hampshire
Lewiston Housing Authority
M&T Bank
Machias Savings Bank
Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services
Maine Community Action Partnership
Maine Community Bank
Maine Department of Health & Human Services
Maine Equal Justice
Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition
Maine Public Health Association
Maine Real Estate Managers Association
Maine State Building & Construction Trades
Maine Workforce Housing LLC, Portland
Mano en Mano, Millbridge
Mans Development LLC, Yarmouth
Mascoma Bank
Midcoast Regional Housing Trust
NBT Bank
Nickerson & O'Day, Inc., Bangor
North Haven Sustainable Housing
Northeast Rental Housing
Norway Savings Bank
Old Town Housing Authority
Old Wells CNA, South Portland
Penobscot General Constructors
Penguins, Bangor
People's United Bank
PM Construction
Portland Builders
Portland Housing Authority
Preble Street, Portland
Preservation Management, South Portland
Preti Florenty, Portland
Raise-Op Housing Cooperative, Lewiston
Realty Resources Management
Rental Housing Alliance of Southern Maine
Rick Whiting
Rumford, Town of
Sanford Housing Authority
Scott Simons Architects, Portland
Sea Coast Management Company, Topsham
Shalom House, Portland
Silver Street Development Corporation, Portland
South Portland Housing Authority
Spearhawk Group, Yarmouth
St. Germain
Sunrise Opportunities, Machias
S.W. Cole Engineering, Gray
Szanon Company
TD Bank
Tedford Housing, Brunswick
The Caleb Group, Saco
The Eagle Point Companies, South Portland
The Housing Foundation
The Park Danforth, Portland
Thomson Tomasetti, Portland
Through These Doors, Portland
Total Construction Management, Winterport
TPD Construction Co., Sanford
United Way of Greater Portland
Utile, Inc.
Veterans Inc., Lewiston
Veterans of America of Northern NE
Washington County Assoc for Ret. Citizens
Westbrook Housing Authority
Western Maine Community Action, E. Wilton
Winton Scott Architects
Wishcamper Companies, Portland
WMC & Associates
Wright-Ryan Construction, Portland
Yarmouth Housing Collaborative
Year-Round Housing Corp., Long Island
York County Community Action, Sanford
York Housing Authority
Zachos Construction, Freeport
Zero Energy Design
Zion Energy Services

Laura Mitchell
Maine Affordable Housing Coalition
LD 1926

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