

Brian Eng
Portland
LD 1829

Joint Standing Committee on Housing & Economic Development

Testimony of Brian Eng of Portland, Maine
in favor of LD1829 - An Act to Build Housing for Maine Families and Attract
Workers to Maine Businesses - Sponsored by Speaker Fecteau

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee
on Housing and Economic Development.

My name is Brian Eng. I am currently working to produce or preserve desperately needed housing in five municipalities across Somerset, Cumberland and York Counties. Through this work, I have collaborated with four different municipalities to develop or redevelop publically owned land or buildings. And I have engaged a similar number of Maine municipalities through their respective land use entitlement processes.

We all know that time is money, and that excessive time and uncertainty kills deals. My experience with these divergent land use entitlement processes have been costly and time-consuming. I have had the good fortune to not encounter seemingly arbitrary and subjective processes unlike some of my peers. I also fortunately have not had a deal die as many others have. But my projects have certainly taken longer to complete and required greater costs both directly related to the entitlement process and indirectly related to market conditions like the costs of labor, materials, financing, etc.

I am sharing strong support for LD 1829, a comprehensive and necessary measure that takes meaningful steps to address Maine's worsening housing shortage. Maine's 2025 Roadmap to Housing Production identified regulatory bottlenecks and inconsistent municipal practices are stalling the production of housing that Maine families and workers urgently need.

The combination of skyrocketing rents, low housing inventory, and home prices rising faster than incomes is leaving working families, seniors, and young adults without viable housing options. While the state made some progress in LD2003 to reduce barriers, this bill had several items removed that continue to block or delay urgently needed affordable housing. These delays are not just a nuisance—they are a major contributor to decades of underproduction of homes in Maine.

Section 1 of this bill—establishing the Housing Development Resolution Board—is a critical policy step. Without a fair, efficient, and expert appeals process, developers and housing nonprofits will continue to face unpredictable, costly legal battles even when they meet all local and state requirements.

Both New Hampshire and Connecticut show us that a housing resolution board is a proven approach for balancing local review with the urgent need for statewide housing production. LD 1829 would bring us up to speed with regional peers who recognize that predictable, fast, and fair land use review processes are essential for solving a statewide housing crisis. These housing boards have increased housing production, ensured due process, and limited costly litigation across New England, whilst delivering findings equally in favor of municipalities and developers.

In addition to establishing the Housing Development Resolution Board, LD 1829 strengthens Maine's pro-housing framework with targeted and evidence based policies.

I have worked in communities with zoning and without and the overall problems are similar. Planning board members and elected officials can benefit from land use planning training. Minimum lot size coverage and height limitation ordinances create obstacles even in the absence of zoning. In the absence of zoning standards, Planning Board and elected official land use training becomes even more important.

LD 1829 takes a balanced, forward-looking approach to the complex problem of housing underproduction in Maine. It does not eliminate local planning authority—but it does establish a consistent, expert, and timely process to ensure that

municipal land use decisions do not unreasonably block needed housing.
I urge you to vote “Ought to Pass” on LD 1829.
Thank you for your time and consideration.

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