

Matt Gilley
Harpwell
LD 1829

Senator Curry Representative Gere and distinguished members of the housing and economic development committee thank you for the opportunity to speak today. I am here to express my strong opposition to LD 1829.

While I support efforts to address Maine's housing crisis, LD 1829 represents an unprecedented and deeply concerning overreach of state authority into local land use decision-making. Maine has a long and proud tradition of home rule, enshrined in both statute and practice. It allows municipalities to enact ordinances that reflect their unique character, geography, infrastructure, and community values. LD 1829 severely undermines that principle.

This bill would strip towns of their authority to make site-specific zoning decisions, impose statewide development standards, and route appeals to a newly created state board—the Housing Development Resolution Board—rather than the local authorities or courts traditionally entrusted with these matters. Most concerning is that this board's decisions are final and not subject to appeal, effectively removing an entire layer of judicial oversight from the process.

Municipalities would be forced to allow specific housing densities and waive height restrictions, even in cases where local infrastructure, environmental constraints, or neighborhood context make such development inappropriate. The bill also prohibits towns from capping residential growth in designated areas, regardless of the pace or impact of that growth on schools, roads, and other services.

Moreover, LD 1829 removes public input from many development reviews—requiring only administrative approval for certain projects. This silences the voices of residents and neighbors who have a legitimate interest in how their communities grow.

Let me be clear: solving the housing crisis should not come at the expense of democratic, local self-governance. LD 1829 sets a dangerous precedent that could erode the autonomy of towns across Maine. Instead of working with municipalities as partners, this bill takes away their authority, undermines their planning efforts, and imposes one-size-fits-all policies from Augusta.

I urge this committee to reject LD 1829 and instead support collaborative solutions that respect home rule, honor community voices, and provide flexible tools to address housing challenges without sacrificing local control.

Thank you for your consideration

Matt Gilley