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## **Supplemental Testimony on LD 2173**

### **An Act to Update the Laws Regarding Housing Developments and Accessory Dwelling Units**

**Steven Weems**

**To the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development**

March 2, 2026

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, Representative Golek, and other members of the joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development; It's Steve Weems again, still a member of the Brunswick Town Council. The following supplemental thoughts are offered in the context of the discussion at your first work session on this bill, held February 26. Today I'm not speaking for the town, just offering ideas, to be timely. I do think these are consistent with my Town's position on the subject. Only two matters are discussed below.

First, regarding the possible use of a municipality's population as the metric that would be used to calculate its minimum amount of growth that must be allowed if it adopts a municipal-wide rate of growth ordinance, I think the value of using population is that this would spread responsibility for development of additional housing more fairly, untethering it from a municipality's recent experience in this regard. At a level of 1% (one percent) of population this would be 14,000 dwelling units per year if applied statewide. In Brunswick, this would be 218 based on the 2020 U. S. Census Bureau's decennial figure or 225 based on current estimates. As a minimum required it might be fine to just use the decennial figure for the next ten years, or adjust this figure annually based on the average annual rate of population change experienced over the previous 10 years, again based on the official decennial figures.

As to the question of whether this would be fair based on the demographics of the population growth (young or old), I would say all people need to be housed and the average number of people per house has hovered around 2.0 for a long time. For years it was over 2.0, then over a decade or so went below this benchmark, and now is trending up toward it again.

Second, in **Sec. 11. 30-A MRSA Section 4364-A, subsection 2-A** of the original printed version of LD 2173, the Westbrook submission seems to suggest that the lot size and density requirement provisions relating to areas in a town with public water and sewer but not in the designated growth area could be eliminated, ostensibly because there are no or limited areas in this category. To the contrary, some towns, including Brunswick are identified and are zoning such areas for growth, but more moderate growth than in the designated growth areas, because these areas are primarily existing residential areas. In fact, Brunswick is experienced significant growth in these medium density areas, but unfortunately it is primarily market-rate housing, not affordable housing. It would seem more consistent with the original intent of LDs 2003 and 1829 to **amend Section Sec 11. Subsection 2-A, paragraph B** to apply only in the event the proposed development is for affordable housing exclusively, leaving the requirements applying to market-rate housing to the municipality to establish. This could be accomplished by adding the following sentence at the end of this section of LD 2173: **“These provisions apply to affordable housing developments only.”** Brunswick and other communities already are experiencing a boom in market-rate housing.

Thank you considering these additional thoughts.

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Supplemental Testimony from Steve Weems of Brunswick