



PORTLAND
Regional Chamber
of Commerce

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**Testimony in Opposition to LD 214-An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding Zoning and
Land Use Restrictions to Limit Certain Requirements to Municipalities with a
Population of More than 10,000**

Joint Select Committee on Housing

April 11, 2023

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere and members of the Committee on Housing,

My name is Eamonn Dundon, and I am the Director of Advocacy of the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce. We represent 1,300 businesses in our region who employ over 65,000 Mainers. We are submitting this testimony today to express our organization's strongest opposition to LD 214.

Our organization closely followed and supported LD 2003 and we were delighted to see its passage as the first step in a long overdue state-level discussion on zoning and land use guidelines that protect property rights, afford housing opportunities, and grow smartly for our environmental future. When we supported that legislation, we did so because we recognized four key issues with the zoning status quo:

1. **The zoning status quo deprives Mainers of their property rights and basic freedoms.**
2. **The zoning status quo limits the ability of people to be self-sufficiently successful by restricting the ability of individuals to move to places with higher-paying jobs.**
3. **The zoning status quo is regressive, with the biggest burden being felt by those at the bottom of the income scale.**
4. **The zoning status quo inhibits the state's ability to address our climate goals.**



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Those concerns have only become more apparent over the last year as many municipalities have made it harder to build new housing in Maine¹²³⁴. The harder we make it to build housing in our densest areas like Cumberland County, the more demand, and thus deficit, of housing will spread to the rural areas of our state. Without action now, no municipality will be immune from devastating stories of longtime residents being forced to look further afield from their hometowns for housing. The need for a statewide solution with participation from all municipalities has never been more important, but unfortunately this legislation before you would send a message that some municipalities are exempt from the negative externalities the housing shortage exacerbates.

In our region, the municipality that has led the way on the implementation of LD 2003 is Cape Elizabeth, which is under the 10,000 person population floor in this bill. This time last year they were better known for their opposition to even one affordable housing development in their town center, and yet their Town Council and staff is pulling together to implement LD 2003 in full without delay. Over the course of the last 11 months, they have had three Town Council meetings, six Ordinance Committee meetings, and one public forum that have resulted in a complete redline amendment to the Town's land use code that fully satisfies the requirements incumbent upon municipalities in LD 2003. If they can do this, with limited resources and a weak appetite for new development, it is imminently possible for any other similarly situated municipality to do the same.

We thank you for your time and commitment to all Mainers, and we urge this committee to vote Ought Not to Pass on this legislation.

¹ [New housing caps proposed in Scarborough to regulate growth](#)

² [Brunswick extends housing development moratorium](#)

³ [Voters approve building cap for North Yarmouth village](#)

⁴ [Vote overturns town center zoning amendments in Cape Elizabeth](#)