

Patricia Wright
Old Orchard Beach
LD 214

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere and Distinguished Members of the Select Joint Committee on Housing:

My name is Patricia Wright and I live in Old Orchard Beach; I have lived and worked in Maine for over 40 years: from Old Town & Bangor to Scarborough and Falmouth to Bethel and Waterboro. And if I haven't lived or worked in an area, I probably have visited! I am also an advocacy volunteer with AARP Maine.

I am writing in opposition to three bills that are coming before you today:
LD 214; LD 665; and LD1154.

Each of these bills undermines the integrity of a law passed last year (LD 2003) and would hamper the effort to address the housing issue statewide. LD 214 would create a situation limiting initiative to creatively address housing to those municipalities over 10,000, which effectively shuts out most of the state. The housing crisis is a state-wide issue not limited by town size. It affects each and every town and citizen—either directly or indirectly. Businesses can't find employees if there is nowhere for people to live; people can't move from unhealthy or unsafe situations (including elderly looking to, or needing to downsize); and young people can't return to, or remain in, the state to live or start families. We need housing stock state-wide to meet these and other housing needs and keep our economy strong.

LD 665 would extend the deadline for compliance with LD 2003 another two years; Maine's been in a housing crisis for several years now. And although we are finally acknowledging this, it would be derelict to delay the potential positive impacts of LD 2003 for our citizens another two years. Municipalities have had a year to consider the implementation of this bill and should not have another two years to drag their feet while people in need of housing fruitlessly search and the homeless become more and more mired in poverty and hopelessness.

Finally, LD 1154 seeks a change in words (from require to allow) for the ADU implementation.

Another backhanded way of allowing municipalities to avoid their own responsibilities to assist with creating housing opportunities. Again, the housing crisis is a statewide issue and each town needs to be involved in the solutions. The tendency to not want to feel compelled to act by governmental intercession is very understandable but sometimes gets in the way of our own best interests or the interests of our fellow citizens.

I am a former school counselor in Maine for over 30 years who dealt with students living in cars, motels and non-winterized cabins; I am a mother of two adult children who struggled terribly to find housing here in Maine these past few years; and I am a citizen who sees the homeless or those "one step from homelessness" in every town I travel in. I am asking you to do the right thing for all the citizens of Maine by voting against LD214, LD 665, and LD1154.

Sincerely, Patricia Ann Wright
20 Orange Pippin Drive,
Old Orchard Beach, ME