



Regional Councils

Your partner in implementing state priorities

November 14, 2023

Special Select Committee on Housing
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Regional Councils testimony neither for nor against to LD 1976, *An Act to Update the Growth Management Program Laws*

Dear Sen. Pierce, Rep. Gere, and Housing Committee members;

Please accept this letter as the testimony of 10 regional councils in Maine neither for nor against LD 1976, *An Act to Update the Growth Management Program Laws*.

Our ten regional councils cover the state of Maine. We deliver transportation, land use, sustainability, and economic development services to municipalities and their residents, and we collaborate with many state agencies in our work.

The Growth Management Act (GMA) is due for an update. It has flaws and needs to be updated in both statute and rule. However, the specifics contained in LD 1976 have raised many concerns amongst our regional councils and our member municipalities. We see numerous conflicts between the bill as drafted and existing laws, regulations, and municipal ordinances.

Regional planning agencies have had little or no input into LD 1976, and we believe much broader stakeholder and community discussions are needed before enacting changes to the GMA. As we have discussed with you before, regional councils are an excellent means of implementing state policy priorities, and their voices will improve any GMA changes if the councils are asked to provide input and implementation support.

Because LD 1976 has substantial impacts on housing, land use, and environmental policies, we suggest converting this bill into a resolve that convenes all the diverse stakeholders that have interest in the GMA, and charges them with developing recommended GMA changes for presentation to the 2025 legislative session.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our concerns with LD 1976, and please let us know if any of us can provide anything more to support your work on this important issue.