



Testimony of

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Before

The Joint Select Committee on Housing

In support of

LD 772: An Act to Establish a Process to Vest Rights for Land Use Permit Applicants

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Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing, I am Erik Jorgensen Senior Director of Government Relations and Communications at the Maine State Housing Authority (MaineHousing) and I am submitting this testimony in support of LD 772: An Act to Establish a Process to Vest Rights for Land Use Permit Applicants.

MaineHousing has been helping Maine people own, rent, repair, and heat their homes since 1969. We are an independent state authority (not a state agency) created to address the problems of unsafe, unsuitable, overcrowded, and unaffordable housing. We are authorized to issue bonds to finance single family mortgages for first time homebuyers and for affordable multi-family housing.

We are also authorized to administer a number of state and federal programs, including rental subsidies, weatherization, fuel assistance, two housing block grants,

the low-income housing tax credit program, and homeless grant programs. We receive state general fund revenue for homeless programs and receive a dedicated portion of the real estate transfer tax for the Housing Opportunities for Maine (HOME) Fund.

LD 772 is a simple bill that would foster regulatory predictability for developers and others who are seeking land use permits. Building and land development are complex and difficult activities under the best of circumstances. Projects generally require interactions over time with multiple boards, and compliance with numerous rules and regulations. When the regulatory landscape shifts as a project is in development, these shifts can have the effect of “moving the goal posts”. This can add time and cost to a project, and in some cases completely derail it. LD 772 is easy to understand: it would assure that the rules under which a project starts will remain in place until that project is complete.

With Maine experiencing an urgent need to develop more housing quickly, facilitating development becomes more important than ever. This modest, common-sense legislation will not revolutionize development, but it’s a solid step in the right direction, and we hope you will choose to support it.