



**131st Legislature
Joint Select Committee on Housing**

Testimony of Laura Mitchell, Executive Director of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition

November 14, 2023

**In favor of LD 772- An Act to Establish a Process to Vest Rights for Land Use Permit Applicants
- sponsored by Senator Matt Pouliot**

Good afternoon, Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and esteemed members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing, my name is Laura Mitchell, I serve as the Executive Director of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition.

The Maine Affordable Housing Coalition (MAHC) is a nonprofit membership organization of more than 140 Maine housing development, architecture, construction, design, engineering, shelter, and housing services organizations. We work to solve Maine's housing crisis by advocating for the creation and preservation of housing for all people in Maine.

MAHC is sharing this testimony today in favor of LD 772, An Act to Establish a Process to Vest Rights for Land Use Permit Applicants sponsored by Senator Matt Pouliot. This bill gives an applicant for a land use permit the right to have a municipality or the Maine Land Use Planning Commission review the application on the basis of municipal ordinances in effect at the time the land use application permit is filed. Thus, providing a cut-off date by which an applicant can have certainty that the municipal ordinance standards will not change in the middle of the process.

This procedural change will help lower costs and catalyze investment and housing creation in Maine, by providing clarity and certainty to housing investors. Maine's economy requires housing for its workforce. Maine needs 84,000 units of housing by 2030. This legislation is vital to reduce risk, save time, and lower housing costs.

Changes to ordinances after application submission can double or triple costs for legal, engineering, architecture and design as housing creators need to go back to the drawing board. Maine needs a small army of housing developers and investors to meet the housing need in our state. To achieve that, we must create a regulatory environment that encourages small-scale housing builders, up through larger developers. Small-scale builders in particular need certainty and lower risk. Without that, housing creators won't have the interest or capacity to solve the housing crisis in Maine.

As you know, Maine is in a housing crisis and demand outstrips supply. This imbalance is only predicted to increase. **Building new affordable housing is vital.** LD772 can help meet Maine's need for housing.

Thank you.

Laura Mitchell
Portland
LD 772

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