



**131<sup>st</sup> Legislature**  
**Joint Select Committee on Housing**  
**Testimony of Laura Mitchell, Executive Director of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition**  
**November 14, 2023**  
**In Opposition of LD 1976- An Act to Update the Growth Management Program Laws**  
**- sponsored by Representative Melanie Sachs**

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 in opposition to LD 1976, An Act to Update the Growth Management Program Laws sponsored by Representative Melanie Sachs.**

While MAHC is generally in support of updating this decades old law, **we are concerned that the current version of this bill doesn't require towns to have a minimum size for their assigned growth areas.**

LD2003, passed in 2022, won't go into effect until January 2024 for town council communities and June 2024 for other smaller towns. LD2003 is a landmark bill to help address the severe shortage of homes in Maine, particularly for those in need of affordable housing. It requires towns to allow density bonuses and LIHTC projects in their assigned growth areas.

**By LD 1976 not requiring a minimum growth area size, there is an opportunity to reduce growth areas to such a small size that affordable housing projects encouraged by LD2003 wouldn't even fit.** MAHC doesn't support creating this loop hole. MAHC is especially concerned because our state hasn't even begun to reap the benefits of LD2003 in the form of much needed affordable housing in areas that communities already defined for growth and development.

Thank you for considering this issue.

Laura Mitchell  
Portland  
LD 1976

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By LD 1976 not requiring a minimum growth area size, there is an opportunity to reduce growth areas to such a small size that affordable housing projects encouraged by LD2003 wouldn't even fit. MAHC doesn't support creating this loop hole. MAHC is especially concerned because our state hasn't even begun to reap the benefits of LD2003 in the form of much needed affordable housing in areas that communities already defined for growth and development.

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