

Mayor Rollins, Augusta
Mayor Casavant, Biddeford
Mayor Cayer, Lewiston
Mayor Snyder, Portland
Mayor Glaser, Rockland



Mayor Doyle, Saco
Mayor Mastraccio, Sanford
Mayor Pride, South Portland
Mayor Foley, Westbrook

Testimony in Support of

LD 1694, An Act to Create the Maine Redevelopment Land Bank Authority

Presented by Mayor Anne-Marie Mastraccio

May 13, 2021

The Mayors' Coalition is a nonpartisan group formed in 2012, and currently includes the Mayors of nine Maine communities - Augusta, Biddeford, Lewiston, Portland, Rockland, Saco, Sanford, South Portland, and Westbrook – with a combined population of nearly 250,000. The Coalition advocates for state and federal policies that recognize the important role that Maine cities play in providing vital services to Maine people across our state, and the positive impact Maine cities have on the economic strength of our state. The Coalition seeks to work in partnership with Maine's state and federal elected officials to meet the needs of Maine people.

I am pleased to be here today to present this testimony in support of LD 1694 on behalf of the Mayors' Coalition. This bill is a practical and comprehensive approach to tackling a vexing problem in many communities: underutilized and blighted properties that are sitting idle due to title, tax, or lien complications, environmental contamination, or functional obsolescence. Currently, municipalities and private developers face intractable barriers to redeveloping these properties and this bill provides a much needed solution.

LD 1694 authorizes the establishment of municipal, regional, and state Land Banks, establishes a committee to advance the Development Ready Communities Program, and leverages available federal funding. Maine would join nearly 20 other states that already have Land Bank programs and allow Maine to qualify to share in federal funding that is available for Land Banks. We also believe that this bill aligns with our state priorities and the priorities of the Mayors' Coalition regarding climate change, housing, and economic development.

This bill provides the structure and tools that municipalities need to turn these properties around so they can provide opportunities for much needed housing and economic development. We urge the Committee to support this bill. Thank you for your consideration and I would be happy to answer your questions.