



MAINE AFFORDABLE HOUSING COALITION

Testimony of Greg Payne

On behalf of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic
Advancement and Business

In Support of LD 1694: *An Act to Create the Maine Redevelopment Land Bank Authority*

May 13, 2021

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business, my name is Greg Payne. I am the Director of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition (MAHC).

MAHC is a diverse coalition of more than 135 private and public sector organizations including developers, architects, engineers, builders, investors, community action programs, public housing authorities, housing and service providers, advocates, and others working to advance solutions that create and preserve affordable housing in Maine.

MAHC supports LD 1694 because it would provide an additional tool to help municipalities address the severe shortage of affordable housing in Maine. The most recent American Community Survey data reveals that 20%, or more than 30,000 renter households statewide, are paying more than half of their income on housing costs and more than 70,000 renter households spend more than a third of their incomes on housing costs. Meanwhile, more than 25,000 Maine households are sitting on waiting lists for federal Housing Choice Vouchers.

In the face of this overwhelming need, the resources available to create affordable homes for Maine people are far too scarce. An annual average of only 230 new, affordable homes has been produced statewide over the past seven years. We must find new tools wherever possible to improve this anemic rate of production.

LD 1694 creates one such new tool, by helping Maine municipalities to convert vacant, abandoned, and tax delinquent properties into productive use. It also helps to alleviate the need for new construction, thereby preventing new greenhouse gas emissions while maintaining existing carbon storage in the property. To tackle climate change and use our resources wisely, we need to focus housing initiatives on places where needed infrastructure already exists.

We applaud those who have crafted this legislation and believe that the creation of a Maine Redevelopment Land Bank Authority would advance efforts to create the additional housing that Mainers need, while aiding those towns most in need of support.

Thank you for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

MEMBERS

AARP Maine
ABG Consulting, Gray
AlliedCook Construction, Portland
Andy Jackson, Consultant, Peaks Island
Anew Development LLC, Portland
Apartments for People LLC, Belfast
Archetype Architects, Portland
Associated General Contractors of Maine
Auburn Housing Authority
Augusta Housing Authority
Avesta Housing, Portland
Bangor Area Homeless Shelter
Bangor Housing
Bangor Savings Bank
Bank of New Hampshire, Falmouth
Bath Housing
Bath Savings Institution
Benchmark Construction, Westbrook
Boston Capital
Boston Financial Investment Management
Bowman Constructors, Newport
Brunswick Housing Authority
Camden National Bank
CEI, Brunswick
CHA Architecture, Portland
City of Portland Department of Housing
Clancy Company, Kennebunkport
Clark Insurance, Portland
CohoReznick LLP, New York, NY
Community Concepts, Lewiston
Community Housing of Maine, Portland
Cooperative Development Institute, South Freeport
Cranberry Isles Realty Trust
Credere Associates, Westbrook
Cumberland County
Curtis Thaxter, Portland
CWS Architects, Portland
Developers Collaborative, Portland
Development Services of New England, Freeport
Downeast Community Partners, Ellsworth
DrummondWoodsum, Portland
Easton Peabody Consulting Group, Augusta
Fort Fairfield Residential Development Corp.
Four Directions Development Corporation, Orono
Freeport Community Services
Freeport Housing Trust
Gannett Construction, Augusta
Gawron Turgeon Architects, Scarborough
Genesis Community Loan Fund, Brunswick
Gorham Savings Bank
Great Falls Construction, Gorham
Grammes Pulaski Consulting LLC, Portland
GrowSmart Maine
Habitat for Humanity of Greater Portland
Hancock Lumber, Casco
Healthy Androsogoin, Lewiston
Home Start, Peaks Island
Homeless Voices for Justice, Portland
Housing Foundation, Orono
Housing Initiatives of New England, Portland
Housing Partnership, Portsmouth, NH
Hunt Capital Partners LLC, El Paso, TX
Island Institute, Rockland
Islesboro Affordable Property
Jensen Baird Gardner & Henry, Portland
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Kaplan Thompson Architects, Portland
Kennebec Savings Bank, Augusta
Kennebec Valley Community Action, Waterville
KeyBank
Lansbury/French Construction, Scarborough
LaRoche Consulting, LLC, Augusta
Lassel Architects, South Berwick
LeadingAge Maine & New Hampshire
Lewiston Housing Authority
Machias Savings Bank
Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services
Maine Community Action Association
Maine Community Bank
Maine Department of Health & Human Services
Maine Equal Justice
Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition
Maine Real Estate Managers Association
Maine Workforce Housing LLC, Portland
Mans in Mans, Millbridge
Manx Development LLC, Yarmouth
NBT Bank, Portland
Neighborhood Housing League, Lewiston
Nickerson & O'Day, Inc., Bangor
North Haven Sustainable Housing
Northeast Rental Housing
Northern NE Housing Investment Fund, Portland
Norway Savings Bank
Old Town Housing Authority
Opportunity Alliance, South Portland
Otis Atwell CPAs, South Portland
Penobscot Nation, Indian Island
Penquis, Bangor
People's United Bank
Portland Builders
Portland Housing Authority
Preble Street, Portland
Preservation Management, South Portland
Preti Fishery, Portland
Raise-Up Housing Cooperative, Lewiston
Sanford Housing Authority
Scott Simons Architects, Portland
Sea Coast Management Company, Topsham
Shalom House, Portland
Silver Street Development Corporation, Portland
South Portland Housing Authority
Sparhawk Group, Yarmouth
Sunrise Opportunities, Machias
S.W. Cole Engineering, Gray
TD Bank
Tedford Housing, Brunswick
The Caleb Group, Saco
The Eagle Point Companies, South Portland
The Park Juniper, Portland
Thernton Tomasetti, Portland
Through These Doors, Portland
Total Construction Management, Winterset
TPD Construction Co., Sanford
United Way of Greater Portland
Veterans Inc., Lewiston
Volunteers of America of Northern NE
Westbrook Housing Authority
Western Maine Community Action, E. Wilton
Wishcamper Companies, Portland
Wright-Ryan Construction, Portland
Yarmouth Senior Housing
Year-Round Housing Corp., Long Island
York County Community Action, Sanford
York County Shelter Programs, Alfred
York Housing
Zachau Construction, Freeport