



TOWN OF GRAY

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Good morning Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement, and Business:

My name is Nate Rudy and I am here in full **support of LD 1694**, An Act to Create the Maine Redevelopment Land Bank Authority. As Gray's Town Manager, I am presently working with our Town Council and Town staff to implement our 2020 Comprehensive Plan revision, which envisions a robust Gray Village at the historical crossroads of five high-traffic corridors including the Maine Turnpike, or I-95, and also places high priority on protecting environmentally sensitive open spaces in other rural zones.

To make this work, we need to revitalize our village core and redevelop blighted properties in ways that attract new business and real estate investment of the kind that stabilizes or increases land value, protects and harmonizes with existing neighborhoods, and brings vibrancy to an historic village center and its artery roads.

Gray is like many towns and cities in Maine that have great aspirations for revitalizing their downtowns and villages, but often lack the tools and resources to make it happen. The concepts presented in LD1694, like land banking and a Development Ready Community program, will help us shape new investment in Maine's town and cities as new development pressure continues to come to our state. We want more housing and new businesses, and welcome new residents, but it's essential that these developments contribute to sustainable local government, contribute their share to the tax base, and align with local planning and the community's expressed goals and values.

I hope you will support LD1694 in the spirit of state and local government collaboration, as it will give local governments tools we need to realize the vision of our comprehensive plans and local development initiatives, and will help steer Federal funds toward their intended purposes of stabilizing communities and enriching the lives of Maine people.

Respectfully,