



SIERRA CLUB

MAINE CHAPTER

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To: Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business

From: Minot Weld, Sierra Club Maine

Date: May 12, 2021

Re: Testimony in Support of L.D. 1694, **An Act To Create the Maine Redevelopment Land Bank Authority**

Dear Senator Curry, Representative Roberts and distinguished Committee Members, I write on behalf of Sierra Club Maine's over 20,000 members and supporters. Founded in 1892, Sierra Club is one of our nation's oldest and largest environmental organizations. We work diligently to amplify the power of our 3.8 million members nation-wide as we move to defend everyone's right to a healthy world.

We view LD 1694 as an essential piece of smart-growth legislation. Establishment of the Maine Redevelopment Authority will facilitate the repurposing and redevelopment of derelict properties. Doing so will return these assets to the tax rolls while re-enlisting them in local economies, providing housing as well as space for businesses and community needs.

LD 1694 is modeled after successful programs that have been established in other states. It provides local governments with the necessary tools to streamline the repositioning of complex, underperforming properties. Such a focus will relieve development pressure on green-fields reducing sprawl, while bringing effort to bear on the redevelopment of downtown and in-town properties.

Empowered by the Redevelopment Land Bank Authority and guided by the Development Ready Community Planning Committee, Maine municipalities will have the opportunity to increase the quality of life and stimulate economic vitality in communities impacted by blighted and potentially unsafe properties.

This is clearly a win-win proposition.

Respectfully submitted,

Minot Weld
Legislative Team
Sierra Club Maine