



Serving the Municipalities of Southwestern
Maine

Senator Hickman, Senate Chair
Representative Sylvester, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing
100 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0100

Re: LD 1240 *Resolve, To Review Barriers to Regional Solutions for Housing Choices*

Senator Rafferty, Representative Sylvester, and Members of the Labor
and Housing Committee;

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Southern Maine Planning and Development
Commission (SMPDC) in support of LD 1240, *Resolve, To Review Barriers to Regional
Solutions for Housing Choices*.

SMPDC serves 39 municipal members, from Kittery to Old Orchard Beach and all of York
County, as well as a portion of Oxford County including Fryeburg Lovell, Sweden, as well
as other communities. We also staff the Metropolitan Planning Organization, which
allocates federal transportation funds to roads and public transportation for the Southern
most portion of York County including Elliot, Kittery, Berwick, South Berwick and York.

Based on our experience working with municipalities in our region, we believe regional
implementation of state policy goals gives Maine the best chance for success, especially in
the areas of Municipal Planning and Sustainability and Resiliency and Housing, which
we are very actively engaged. Our municipalities rely heavily on our organization to
provide support to them in these areas. In the past, we had received funds to provide
Technical support to our communities who are interested in studying the important
issues like housing throughout our region, assistance that may not otherwise be
available to them. Now SMPDC is reliant on these communities to pay for that level of
support since the money that we have relied on in the past is currently no longer
available to us. SMPDC is recently embarking on our own housing initiative to study
these issues for our communities. We are funding this analysis out of our own packets
because it is an important issue to our region. In looking at this from a Regional
perspective SMPDC believes that this is the correct approach to address this matter.
SMPDC further believes that funding the Regional Councils is and restoring money to
support our agencies across the state is vitally important as part of this overall analysis
about to be undertaken.



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We have an appreciation of the need for regional support for individual municipalities who do not have the resources themselves to implement state goals. We also see the increased efficiency and effectiveness that regional action provides, as compared to relying on individual communities acting independently.

Effective regional planning to implement state goals requires resources that are not currently available. We know from our experience that effective regional action must be appropriately funded.

If it would be useful to the committee, we would be pleased to provide you with more information for your work session about regional planning successes as an illustration of what is possible when communities work together to achieve things they cannot do individually on their own.

As you work toward structuring local, regional, state, and federal partnerships to improve our economy, support our infrastructure, and safeguard our future, we urge you to consider using this bill as a vehicle for exploring how to align government efforts at every level, and properly fund the work needed to exam such issues as the housing needs in every region of the state.

For these reasons, we ask you to support LD 1240, or seeking other ideas that can assist and support Regional level planning for the communities in all of your regions. Thank you for the opportunity to share our support of this **bill** and please let me know if I can do anything else to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

Lee Jay Feldman
Director of Planning