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Greetings. I am writing in support of LD 1656 and intend to enumerate the value and feasibility of the sustainability provisions contained within it.

First, about me: I am a Maine licensed Architect living in Portland. I have provided sustainability consulting on each of the three certification provisions in LD 1656, Passive House, LEED, and Living Building Challenge in Maine and throughout the United States. I am chair of the board of passivhausMAINE whose mission "...is committed to decreasing carbon emissions, dependency on fossil fuels, and the costs for winter heating in Maine." And, the whole of professional and volunteer work is aimed towards a personal life mission to shape a more equitable and resilient human built environment than currently exists.

LD 1656 is easily supportable for all of its provisions. The sustainability requirements are a clear win, win, win for the state in a number of ways:

1. It has an obvious net good impact on planet to reduce carbon emissions associated with project. Each of the certification systems in the bill are designed with a major goal for projects to be energy efficient in operation and in the energy required to build them. Buildings account for nearly half of global carbon emissions so to compensate new building not only need to be efficient, they need to strike for "carbon positivity" and each of these certification pathways provide a structured, feasible way for each new building in Maine to move closer to that goal.
2. Residents living in these buildings will enjoy a much healthier interior environment and wildly reduced utility costs. Provision of a high performance multifamily building means spaces can be heated at times with just body heat of those in the space! And when more heat is needed very little is required. And, those in need of affordable housing much more susceptible to negative impacts of unhealthy indoor environment. So providing reliably healthy and durable buildings create a massive impact on those living there.
3. While single family houses could cost 5% more pursuing one of sustainability certifications, a project development team sees no effective increase in cost on a multifamily project and reaps very significant savings in ongoing building operating costs. With Passive House certification in particular, it can be achieved using standard construction techniques already familiar with Maine tradespeople.
4. With the direction that Maine is moving with updated energy codes any gap between minimum legal building standard and sustainability requirements in LD 1656 is tiny when it does exist. This is important to recognize. It means buildings are almost across the finish line and these standards while only being a slight lift above legal minimum, yield benefits far beyond that effort.
5. Finally, third party certifications are a way to deliver verified buildings that perform through the long life of the building in ways listed above. It's actually the most cost effective way to do so since it's based on a rigorous and well tested system that benefits from the knowledge, expertise, and experience of the nation's top experts. Buildings are complicated things to produce, we are all benefited by applying best practices that have verified and tested track records like those in LD 1656 (Passive House, LEED Gold, and Living Building Challenge).

Again, speaking as an expert practitioner, this is doable and necessary to provide Mainers with healthy, resilient housing throughout the state. The nature of the benefits to construction are complex and necessarily technical so I am to field any further question and provide additional information that would be helpful in consideration of LD 1656.