



19 Community Drive • Augusta, Maine 04330 • (207) 622-7501 • Fax: (207) 623-3590

**Testimony in Support of LD 2003 (“An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Commission To Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Zoning and Land Use Restrictions”)**

**J. Andrew Cashman on behalf of the Maine Association of REALTORS®**

**March 7, 2022**

Senator Daughtry, Representative Sylvester and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing, my name is Andy Cashman. I am the Founder of Resolve Government Relations and I am here on behalf of my client, the Maine Association of REALTORS®, which is a professional trade association with over 6,200 members statewide. Our members represent both buyers and sellers and are involved in both residential and commercial transactions. Our membership also includes affiliates, which are those professionals involved in real estate transactions, such as bankers, closing agents, title agents, appraisers, building inspectors, surveyors, etc. The Maine Association is a member of the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR) which is the largest trade association in the country.

The Maine Association of REALTORS® (MAR) strongly supports LD 2003. The lack of affordable housing in Maine is a serious problem that warrants wide-ranging policies. MAR has long supported legislation to address affordable housing. Our Association’s President, Madeline Hill was honored to serve on the Commission To Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Zoning and Land Use Restrictions. The Commission spent a great deal of time considering many options. We believe a holistic approach is needed to address the affordable housing problem and we must look at barriers to building more housing. The Commission’s recommendations do just that.

Among other things, we firmly support the Commission’s recommendations to: 1.) amend the Maine Human Rights Act to define terms sometimes used by government entities and municipalities to restrict the construction or development of housing; 2.) prohibit municipalities from capping the number of residential building or development permits per year; 3.) provide municipal support for developing land use ordinances



REALTOR® - is a registered mark which identifies a professional in real estate who subscribes to a strict Code of Ethics as a member of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®



EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

12781773.1

March 2, 2021

Page 2

through the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD); 4.) create \$1.29M in DECD grants to municipalities for labor to administer their responsibilities in developing and implementing land use ordinances; 5.) create an incentive program for municipalities to receive up to \$25,000 in grants for up to 3 years related to reviews of the municipality's ordinances and their impact on the availability of housing; 6.) define "affordable housing", require municipalities to allow affordable housing developments at certain densities, and set criteria to keep the housing affordable for at least 30 years; 7.) require municipalities to allow the construction of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) with requirements for permitting and construction; and 8.) require a municipality to designate a priority development zone for multifamily housing.

We do have two minor concerns with the bill. However, these concerns do not take away from our overall support of the bill. The first concern we have is with the proposal to establish a Municipal Housing Development Permit Board because we believe it adds an additional layer of bureaucracy to the permit process for housing developments. Our second concern is with the requirement that a municipality permit up to 4 dwelling units in all residential zones. We appreciate that a requirement for multiple dwelling units be included in this legislation but have some concern that 4 units may be too many to allow.

Nevertheless, MAR is in strong support of LD 2003 for the reasons stated above. The bill implements the recommendations of the Commission which considered zoning, land use, and other barriers to building affordable housing and suggested sound policies to address our housing shortage.

For these reasons, we urge you to support LD 2003. Thank you for your time and consideration.