

David Glaser
Cape Elizabeth
LD 2003

Re: HP-1489 LD2003

Lack of affordable housing is a national issue as well as a local issue. It must be prioritized for the welfare of our country. While many local issues can and should be decided by local government, there comes a time when more senior government bodies need to supersede local control for the common good.

It is unreasonable to place all affordable housing in larger towns and cities because they are already suffering the greatest hardship. While they all have some affordable housing, they clearly do not have enough to fulfill the substantial need. They also accept additional quality affordable housing with enthusiasm.

The elected officials in Cape Elizabeth, after an exhausting year of research and public hearings, enacted Zoning and other changes to allow for the construction of a limited number of affordable housing units on a limited number of parcels in the town. While the original proposal was for one bedroom senior housing, the town council asked the developer to modify the mix and expand the availability to families needing affordable housing. The town council understood the obligation to share in solving a national and local issue of affordable housing. Then, a small group of residents secured a petition to place the issue on the fall ballot to overturn the act of the town council.

Allowing affordable housing in high income communities is a NIMBY issue. While the organizers of the opposition all stated emphatically that they were in favor of affordable housing, they argued that the elected town officials just chose the wrong location and method to provide for it. At the same time, during the multiple public hearings and written submissions, the same opposition never proposed an alternative.

As a resident of Cape Elizabeth, a Mainer, and an American, I understand the fairness for every community to share in its obligation to help solve a national crisis, that being the lack of affordable housing. I therefore urge the Maine legislature to enact laws that will assist in the equitable allocation of the placement of affordable housing throughout the state. Do not let wealthy enclaves shirk their responsibility and shift a greater burden onto the less affluent.

Thank you
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