



March 6th, 2022

RE: LD-2003, An Act To Implement the Recommendations of the Commission To Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Zoning and Land Use Restrictions

To The Members of 130th Maine State Legislature,

LD-2003 is a bill both businesses and families need. It is not just an affordable housing bill as we commonly understand them because it doesn't simply give out bigger government subsidies to create new oversized apartment blocks that cities, towns, and abutters truly hate. Opposition to this type of development was recently demonstrated by the developer chased out of Cape Elizabeth.

LD 2003 slashes regulations and reallocates market power to individual homeowners and the businesses that will help them build. The bill simplifies thousands of different land-use regulations across the state by creating a common sense set of guidelines for building new homes. The bill will empower landowners to develop their land in creative new ways from creating pockets neighborhoods to traditional 4-Unit apartment buildings. The bill unlocks small scale development which is exactly what our housing market needs to thrive. Small businesses drive the economy, just as small scale housing development *should* drive the housing market.

We understand this, because Backyard ADUs helps homeowners get the most out of their properties by managing their small housing projects. Typically we help a homeowner add an ADU for an aging parent, which frees up the house the parent used to live in and creates a new, high quality small home. We also help owners subdivide land or add dwelling unit(s) to subsidize their retirement, which helps reduce reliance on government programs. For many of these land owners, their home and land is their biggest asset, and often municipal laws give them few options to harvest value from it. Due to diverse rules across municipalities, all of these activities are more complicated than is necessary for small impact housing projects which adds unnecessary cost, time and other barriers.

We've spoken with hundreds of homeowners across Maine and New England, and only 1 in 20 know what they can do with their land. People don't have time to research their town's zoning ordinance to become informed and the rules are too complicated even if they did. Town officials charged to help navigate rules are over burdened with larger projects and civil engineering that navigate rules for a fee, are too expensive for small scale projects. Zoning rules need to be simplified to unlock these missing small-scale projects, and allow individual Mainers to build homes for their neighbors.



Further, as a Business we also cannot learn the thousands of different zoning rules and efficiently help homeowners across Maine at a reasonable price point. We need this bill to reduce our costs, and help Mainers develop their land and build quality small homes from Kittery to Caribou affordably.

In closing, giving landowners the power to develop their own land, is a common sense approach to building more housing.

Wouldn't it be nice if everyone in Maine knew that by law, they could build up to 4 dwelling units or an ADU on their property?

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Lee", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Christopher Lee  
CEO, Backyard ADUs.