

Testimony in Favor of LD2003, regarding provision of affordable housing in Municipalities

Senator Daughtry, Representative Sylvester and members of the Labor and Housing Committee, we. Suzanne Rudalevige and Donald Rudalevige of Cape Elizabeth, are testifying in favor of LD 2003, implementing fair housing in Municipalities.

As residents of Cape Elizabeth, we are intimately aware of NIMBYism in suburban communities, having recently seen a proposed development fall to that concern.

It will be argued that the State is taking powers belonging to the Municipalities and it is true – and it is also right for the State to do so. Municipalities have abused their “rights” and failed in their obligation to provide diverse forms of housing and resisted affordable housing on specious grounds of a development “not fitting into the ethos of the community,” or “disturbing the present – pleasant – atmosphere by its construction.” Even when a majority of the community supports a development or additional housing, a committed minority can delay a project until it becomes cost prohibitive for the developer or householder to proceed. And it is all too easy for the Municipality to yield to the loudest voices, especially if they are part of the “established” families of the community.

The reality is that we badly need more housing and greater diversity, lest our towns become even more deeply entrenched in being ghettos of narrow dimensions.

Everyone says that we are for affordable housing, just not “here.” It is more than time to declare that “here” is the appropriate place and this the appropriate time and LD2003 enables that to happen. Please pass this Legislation.

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