



Town of Orono

Testimony of Geoffrey Wingard, Orono Town Councilor

In Opposition to

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

March 7, 2022

Senator Daughtry, Representative Sylvester, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing. Thank you for taking up the issue of affordable housing in Maine. As a town councilor and as a concerned citizen, I have devoted many hours to researching solutions to our housing crisis. I am an advocate for affordable housing.

However, I do not feel that LD 2003 is a viable solution to the diverse set of problems that have contributed to the dearth of affordable housing options for people across our state. Simply put, a one-size-fits-all policy is not the way to mitigate the effects of a host of contributing factors that have put quality housing out of the reach of many Mainers.

This bill promotes a solution to the housing problem that is viable only when and where certain underlying infrastructure, demographic, and budgetary conditions are met and ignores the actual conditions that exist in diverse urban, rural, and mixed communities across our state. While a bedroom community in York county and a farming community in Aroostook county may both suffer from a lack of available and affordable housing, the causes of that issue and the solutions to that issue are quite different across those locations. LD 2003 does not recognize the diversity of conditions across our state and it does not respect the hard work that local planners and community members have devoted to understanding and addressing the unique conditions that prevail in their own communities.

As an advocate for affordable housing in Maine I cannot support LD 2003 because it proposes a solution to the housing issue that does not recognize the challenges that infrastructure, demographics and increased local costs (borne by local property taxpayers) pose to its implementation and because I do not understand the rush to pass this bill without adequate time for public feedback.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.