

March 3, 2021

Senator Joseph Baldacci, Senate Chair  
Representative Ann Matlack, House Chair  
Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333-0100

Re: LD 446, *An Act To Reestablish the State Planning Office*

Senator Baldacci, Representative Matlack, and Members of the State and Local Government Committee;

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) in support of LD 446, *An Act To Reestablish the State Planning Office*. We are grateful that Rep. Bailey has given us all an opportunity to take a new look at how well-resourced planning can advance Maine's economic and community priorities.

GPCOG serves 30 municipal members, from Sebago Lake to Casco Bay, and the County of Cumberland. We also staff the Metropolitan Planning Organization which allocates federal transportation funds to roads and public transportation, which extends our service territory into York County, including Saco and Biddeford.

GPCOG is the Portland region's Economic Development District, as designated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, and we support numerous programs like Maine Clean Communities and the Maine Broadband Coalition.

Based on our experience working with municipalities in our region, we believe regional implementation of state policy goals gives Maine the best chance for success, especially in the areas of economic recovery and sustainability.

We have a keen appreciation of the need for regional support for individual municipalities who do not have the resources themselves to implement state goals. We also see the increased efficiency and effectiveness that regional action provides, as compared to relying on individual communities acting independently.

Effective regional planning to implement state goals requires resources that are not currently available. We know from our experience as a Metropolitan Planning Organization that does the long-range transportation planning for our area, and as an economic development district, that effective regional action must be appropriately funded.

If it would be useful to the committee, we would be pleased to provide you with more information for your work session about regional planning successes as an illustration of what is possible when communities work together to achieve things they cannot do individually on their own.

As you work toward structuring local, regional, state, and federal partnerships to improve our economy, support our infrastructure, and safeguard our future, we urge you to consider using this bill as a vehicle for exploring how to align government efforts at every level, and properly fund the work needed to create jobs and expand infrastructure investments in Maine.

For all these reasons we ask you to support LD 446. Thank you for the opportunity to share our support of this bill and please let me know if I can do anything else to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,



Kristina Egan  
Executive Director  
Greater Portland Council of Governments