

# **Commission to Increase Housing Opportunities in Maine by Studying Zoning and Land Use Restrictions**

## **Summary of Commission Activities Through First Four Meetings**

### **Resolve 2021, chapter 59 (LD 609):**

- Duties:
  - Review data on housing shortages in the State for low-income and middle-income households;
  - Review state laws that affect the local regulation of housing;
  - Review efforts in other states and municipalities to address housing shortages through changes to zoning and land use restrictions;
  - Consider measures that would encourage increased housing options in the State, including but not limited to municipal incentives, state mandates, eliminating or limiting single-family-only zones and allowing greater housing density near transit, jobs, schools or neighborhood centers; and
  - Review and consider the historical role of race and racism in zoning policies and the best measures to ensure that state and municipal zoning laws do not serve as barriers to racial equality.
- Report: no later than November 3, 2021, the commission shall submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, for presentation to the Joint Standing Committee on Labor and Housing.

### **Meetings & Activities:**

- August 12, 2021
  - Presentations on the current state of housing in Maine:
    - Peter Merrill, Maine State Housing Authority
    - Greg Payne, Maine Affordable Housing Coalition
- September 9, 2021
  - Presentations from municipal decision-makers throughout the State:
    - Jean-Marie Caterina, Councilor, Scarborough
    - Jason Levesque, Mayor, Auburn
    - Andrea Powers, Manager, Fort Fairfield
    - Christine Grimando, Planning and Urban Development Department, Portland
- September 16, 2021
  - Presentations on the historical role of race and racism in zoning policies:
    - Matt Mleczko, The Eviction Lab at Princeton University
    - Yonah Freemark, The Urban Institute
    - Andy O'Brien, AFL-CIO
    - Morgan Williams, The National Fair Housing Alliance

- September 30, 2021
  - Received and reviewed materials on statutory excerpts from the Maine Revised Statutes related to zoning and land use restriction laws in Maine; the Fair Housing Act, and some of the history of fair housing and exclusionary zoning in the courts
  - Heard from State agencies, including:
    - Michael Allen, DAFS
    - Judith East, DACF - LUPC
    - Nick Livesay, DEP
    - Deborah Johnson, DECD
    - Richard McCarthy, DPS-Office of State Fire Marshall
- Public Comment:
  - Mal Carey, Newcastle; George Rheault, Portland; Cynthia Dill, Scarborough; Eamonn Dundon, Portland; Maine Equal Justice Center; Zuri Rashad; Lado Lodoka; Timothy Wells; Maine Policy Institute; Emily Ingwersen, Southern Maine; James Bellisimo, Berwick; Nancy Williams, Waterville; Michael Davis, Downeast/Mid-Coast; Mary Jane West; Kristina Egan, Greater Portland Council of Governments; Lincoln County Regional Planning Commission; Kara Wilbur, Build Maine; Julia Bassett Schwerin, Cape Elizabeth
- Resources ([attached](#))