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Sent: Thursday, October 7, 2021 10:25 AM
To: Risler, Hillary <Hillary.Risler@legislature.maine.gov>
Cc: Prawer, Samuel <Samuel.Prawer@legislature.maine.gov>
Subject: Public Comment: State Policy & Local Growth Limits

This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.

I had hoped the Commission, at this point in its work, would have been able to examine in-depth how state policy intertwines with the path of artificially-induced scarcity and NIMBYism that local land-use control has bestowed upon Maine communities since the advent of zoning (but which really ramped up in Maine post-1970).

This year has produced some excellent examples of how when parts of Maine actually manage to see some population and economic growth, the local and state land-use regimes, working in tandem, help squelch it. Please see attached two recent news stories regarding growth limits in action in Cumberland County.

While limiting the growth of detached homes may be helpful in concept as part of a robust climate change mitigation effort, the growth caps currently in operation in many affluent (and even non-affluent) Maine communities actually do little to help on the climate change front.

Instead such growth caps simply encourage greater regional sprawl including harmful greenfield development in less expensive, easier-to-develop areas. The benefits accrue only to local incumbent homeowners (in the form of higher prices and perceived better quality of life due to lower density) while all the costs and downsides get pushed onto the regional transportation network (more congestion, more demands for new infrastructure and higher maintenance costs of existing infrastructure) and those who cannot afford to buy into established communities which keep pushing development elsewhere.

Because the Commission has such a limited purview and even less time to devote to serious study of this phenomenon, it should make it clear to the Legislature that a completely new "top-down" equitable state land-use policy needs to be put in place that can address this very real landscape in a holistic fashion.