

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

## BACKGROUND

- **We are facing a housing crisis in Maine and the status quo is not sustainable.** [Supply has not kept up with demand.](#) We've built only 250 units of affordable housing annually on average. The need is 1,000 units per year. There are over 25,000 people on affordable housing waitlists statewide. The housing crunch is not going away. [More people from other states are moving to Maine:](#) 16,300 people moved here last year and [only 6,800 building permits were awarded.](#) 4 out of 5 permits were [for single-family homes.](#)
- **Our housing crisis requires that we take action** to better use land where single family homes are already allowed and empower people to build housing on the land they own.
- **Local zoning matters:** This law preserves local dimensional requirements, setback requirements, base density requirements, minimum lot size requirements, shoreland zoning requirements, subdivision regulations, and any existing or future deed restrictions or neighborhood covenants. To build new units, builders must supply proof that there is sufficient capacity for drinking water and wastewater systems. **This law is not one-size fits all because it relies on existing local rules which vary from town to town.**
- **Thanks to this law, Maine will be able to tap into additional federal resources.** The White House has released a policy to reward jurisdictions that have reformed zoning policies with higher scores for certain federal grants.

## LD 2003 HAS BECOME LAW. IT WILL:

1. **Make smaller, attainable homes more available in Maine, growing the supply of housing to tackle affordability:** Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) that meet local requirements will be allowed in all Maine towns so homeowners can build a structure for a family member to live in or to rent. Under the new law, ADUs are excluded from counting towards municipal growth caps. *Goes into effect July 1, 2023.*
2. **Maximize housing in areas where housing is already allowed:** In areas where single-family housing is already permitted, this law allows up to 2 dwelling units on lots where a home already exists. This could be a conversion of an attic or basement into a dwelling unit and/or the addition of an accessory dwelling within the existing dwelling, attached to, or detached from. This law allows up to 4 units on an empty single-family lot, so long as the fourplex is located within a municipal growth area or can be connected to public water and sewer if the town does not have a comprehensive plan. In all cases, local rules for dimensional requirements, minimum lot sizes, setbacks, etc. must be met. This means we'll still have single family homes, and we'll have more in-law apartments over garages for our loved ones, plus more opportunities for duplexes and triplexes. *Goes into effect July 1, 2023.*
3. **Create a density bonus for affordable housing in town-designated growth areas and areas served by public water and sewer.** For projects that meet the affordability requirements, density can be 2.5 times the base density of the municipality. The units are required to be affordable for a period of at least 30 years and must be located in an area where multi-family housing is already allowed by the municipality. *Goes into effect July 1, 2023.*
4. **Answer the call of municipalities who've asked for technical and financial assistance from the state** so they can tackle other land use issues locally, [such as climate resilience or solutions to short term rental challenges.](#) It creates a statewide incentive program for reviewing how zoning and land use ordinances may impact the availability of housing. *Goes into effect July 1, 2022.*
5. **Require zoning ordinances to affirmatively further the Federal Fair Housing Act and the housing provisions in the Maine Human Rights Act.** *Goes into effect August 8, 2022.*