

OPPOSE

LD 1534: An Act To Reform the Land Use and Planning Authority in the Unorganized Territories

Sponsor: Rep. Jeffery GIFFORD of Lincoln

Co-Sponsors: Reps. AYOTTE of Caswell; BURNS of Alfred; CRAFTS of Lisbon; CRAY of Palmyra; Libby of Waterboro; TURNER of Burlington, and WILLETTE of Mapleton and Sens. MASON of Androscoggin, and THOMAS of Somerset

Summary: This bill would abolish the Land Use Regulation Commission as of July, 2012. All authority would be turned over to the counties; the counties would be subject to the same procedures as municipalities. Counties would be required to adopt shoreland zoning but all other planning, zoning, ordinances, permitting, and enforcement would be up to the discretion of the counties.

Explanation: Like LD 17, this bill would abolish the Land Use Regulation Commission and turn over all responsibility to the counties. (See memo on LD 17 at http://www.nrcm.org/documents/LD17_LURC.pdf for more details.) This would lead to a system that is less predictable, less efficient and more expensive than LURC. There is also no assurance that the counties would do any planning, zoning or regulation. Therefore, the natural resources and undeveloped natural character of the unorganized territories would not be protected.

The counties would be treated as municipalities. They would not be required to do any planning or adopt any ordinances other than shoreland zoning. However, if they choose to adopt a comprehensive plan, those plans would be required to meet the same standards as municipal comprehensive plans. Likewise, counties would be required to follow the same processes that municipalities follow.

On LD 17, LURC has estimated that the assumption of these responsibilities would cost the counties, collectively, approximately \$1.1 million more than the counties would receive in permit or other fees. \$700,000 of that \$1.1 million is currently paid for through the State's general fund by all the residents of the state. \$400,000 of the \$1.1 million is the extra cost generated by providing duplicative administrative services in each of the counties containing unorganized townships. Each county's share of this \$1.1 million would be paid for by the residents of the unorganized townships. This cost of this bill would likely be the same as for LD 17 (read fiscal impacts of LD 17 at http://www.nrcm.org/documents/LD17_fiscal_impact.pdf).

NRCM opposes this bill.