



photo by Peter Simmons

## Support Responsible Development in Maine's North Woods

### **Support: LD 1561** **An Act to Amend the** **Land Use Planning** **Commission and** **Enhance the** **Economic Vitality of** **Neighboring** **Communities**

**Sponsored by:** Sen. Brownie Carson  
of Cumberland

**Co-sponsored by:** Sen. Carpenter  
of Aroostook, Rep. Dunphy of Old  
Town, Rep. Grohoski of Ellsworth, Rep.  
Marean of Hollis, Rep. Martin of Eagle  
Lake, Rep. Maxmin of Nobleboro, Rep.  
McCrea of Fort Fairfield, Rep. O'Neil  
of Saco, and Rep. Pluecker of Warren

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*The Land Use Planning Commission (LUPC) is the state agency that oversees planning and zoning for 10.5 million acres of Maine's Unorganized Territories (UT). LUPC's decisions often affect the towns that border the UT, and these communities should be more closely involved in planning decisions. Closer collaboration is needed to ensure economic development happens in these communities where it is needed most.*

*This bill authorizes increased coordination between LUPC and towns near the UT in order to support the economic vitality of these communities while protecting the unique character of Maine's globally significant North Woods.*

### **LD 1561 would establish policies to guide new commercial, industrial, or residential subdivision development into existing communities.**

- Commercial, industrial, or residential subdivision proposals for the UT would need to include an alternatives analysis.
  - o Development proposals for the UT would have to assess whether there are suitable alternative sites available in nearby towns.
  - o Many other existing laws and rules of LUPC, the Site Law, and the Natural Resources Protection Act require similar alternatives analyses.
- Locally driven planning processes would consider the planning needs and development patterns of both Unorganized Territories and nearby towns together.
  - o LUPC would engage in regional land use planning and zoning upon the request of one or more towns bordering LUPC's jurisdiction.
  - o This bill would direct LUPC to maintain the existing adjacency principle (requiring new development in the UT to locate within one mile by road of existing, compatible development) until LUPC engages in regional land use planning and zoning upon the request of local towns.

- LUPC would consult with towns within 10 miles of a proposed rezoning or development in the UT in order to consider the impacts of the proposal on those communities.
- LUPC would conduct a land use structure inventory by July 1, 2020.
  - It is necessary for LUPC to have an up-to-date inventory of existing development locations in the UT in order to effectively plan for the future. The last inventory was conducted decades ago.
  - Identifying the location of existing development and development patterns in the UT will ensure that LUPC's planning is based on accurate data.
- Maine's governor would make four LUPC appointments instead of just one.
  - The bill directs the governor to ensure that each of four areas of expertise (municipal government; fisheries or wildlife; forestry or forest-based recreation; and conservation) is represented on the Commission.
  - Appointing commissioners to LUPC with diverse types of expertise will better position LUPC to work as a partner with towns that border the UT.
  - This change would allow a larger pool of candidates to be considered and ensure that the Commission includes members with the expertise needed to address the unique perspectives required.

### **LD 1561 supports Maine's economy and natural resources:**

- Regional planning that guides responsible new development into existing towns makes economic sense.
  - Towns and their residents benefit from tax revenues.
  - The cost of providing public services such as police, school bus transportation, fire, and emergency services is less than the cost of servicing sprawling development.
  - Civic institutions like hospitals, schools, libraries, and churches benefit from new residents.
- The forests, lakes, and rivers that are the backbone of the forestry and outdoor recreation economies in the North Woods are adequately protected when new development is located in existing towns rather than sprawled and scattered across undeveloped areas.
  - Maine's North Woods are part of the largest intact temperate forest in the world. Protecting the North Woods from fragmentation is critical for maintaining wildlife habitat and migration corridors.
  - Protecting the North Woods supports recreational tourism businesses that depend upon its remote wilderness character.



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