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Testimony of Nancy Smith, Executive Director of GrowSmart Maine

in support of LD 1981, “An Act Regarding the Regulation of Tiny Houses”

January 30, 2020

Senator Diamond, Representative McLean and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation, my name is Nancy Smith and I am the Executive Director of GrowSmart Maine. We are a statewide non-partisan organization working to create lasting prosperity without sacrificing the quality of life that defines Maine.

We support policies, programs and projects that define and protect the value of our unique built and natural places while supporting long term economic opportunity.

We are providing this testimony to indicate our strong support for LD 1981, “An Act Regarding the Regulation of Tiny Houses”. This concept bill has 2 principal purposes: first, to define what a tiny house is; and, second, to establish that a tiny house may be titled as a camp trailer or a trailer. We note that current rules adopted by the Bureau of Building Codes and Standards within the Department of Public Safety already contains a definition of Tiny House: “*A dwelling that is 400 square feet (37 m) or less in floor area excluding lofts.*” Since this rule has the same effect as statutory law, we suggest that a statutory definition of Tiny House is not necessary at the current time.

The second element of LD 1981 allows, on a statewide basis, tiny houses to be titled as either camp trailers or trailers. It appears that current laws and regulations pertaining to the Department of Transportation do not allow the transportation of Tiny Houses on a public way. Allowing tiny homes to be titled as either camp trailers or trailers would provide owners of such structures more flexibility in the transportation of previously constructed tiny houses. ***In our efforts to support economic prosperity throughout the state, we believe that the advent of tiny houses provides a creative, affordable, and comfortable niche within the range of housing choices needed throughout the state. Existing regulatory barriers to their transportation should be evaluated and addressed.*** We believe that LD 1981 provides the necessary statutory opportunity to allow the transportation of tiny houses on roadways throughout the state, thereby helping to address housing shortages and promoting economic development.

Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions that you may have regarding our support for LD 1981.