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Testimony of GrowSmart Maine

in support of LD 1530, "An Act to Allow People to Live in Tiny Houses As a Primary or Accessory Dwelling"

May 5, 2021

Senator Hickman, Representative Sylvester, and Members of the Joint Legislative Committee on Labor and Housing, I am Nancy Smith, and I live in Monmouth. I am executive director of GrowSmart Maine, a statewide organization devoted building lasting prosperity while protecting 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.

The need for housing choices has been and continues to be an issue that impacts Maine's economic future. Lack of housing choices puts at risk economic development, workforce development, housing equity, climate action and all aspects of Maine's unique quality of life. There is no single solution, thus the large number of legislative proposals this session proposing ways to knock down barriers to affordable housing, to home ownership, and to specific kinds of housing. In this committee, we have supported LDs 609, 1312, 1240, and 1246 because each presents compatible and effective strategies. We also support this bill as a valuable piece of the housing choices puzzle.

Tiny houses are a unique and creative option that offers affordable housing, encourages diversity and strengthens a community and neighborhood. I read several online submissions in support of this bill and the letter from Megan Marquis speaks to providing this affordable housing option for young people who choose to live independently and without significant debt. These goals should be applauded!

Much like our support of ADUs in LD 1312, our enthusiasm for this bill does not negate our respect for local control. Municipalities have some ability already to adopt provisions to allow for Tiny Houses, so there is a balancing act with respect to local control and state-wide housing needs. **This committee and the full Legislature must wrestle with whether the issue of housing choices in Maine has reached the point that this bill and LD 1312 are necessary. We think this bill is part of an overall housing choices strategy, and support the bill as presented.**

I appreciate the opportunity to offer our support for this bill,



Executive Director