

# LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY



Maine Real Estate &  
Development Association

**Supporting Responsible Development**

## Legislative Update – Fall 2023

*November 1, 2023*

MEREDA's Public Policy Committee continues to stay engaged on critical matters impacting our members.

### **Maine Housing Production Needs Study Finds Maine Must Create 84,000 Units of Housing by 2030 to Meet Current, Future Demand**

- In October, the State of Maine released a report entitled "[State of Maine Housing Production Needs Study: Homes to support Mainers and Maine businesses, now and in the future](#) (Housing Study)." The report was commissioned by the Maine State Housing Authority (Maine Housing), the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF), and the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). The report found that:

*To address [unmet] needs and meet the State's policy priorities, Maine needs approximately 38,500 homes to remedy historic underproduction and will need an additional 37,900 to 45,800 homes to meet expected population growth and household change by 2030. Maine can meet this goal both through the production of new homes and reinvestment in existing homes that are vacant or unavailable due to disrepair or foreclosure.* Housing Study, pg. 8, available at <https://mainehousing.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/state-of-maine-housing-production-needs-study-full-final-v2.pdf>

- In short, **at least 84,000 new units of housing are needed by 2030**, according to the report. The report discusses the historic underproduction, future need, income, geographic, and other distribution factors that contributed to the overall production number. MEREDA expects the publication of this report will continue to fuel conversation about improving Maine's housing creation landscape, and MEREDA continues to be on the forefront of those conversations both in Augusta and locally.

### **MEREDA Legislation to Reduce Housing Creation Risk Scheduled for Public Hearing on November 14, 2023**

- MEREDA's proposed legislation to establish vested rights for land use applicants at the local level, also known as [LD 772, An Act to Establish a Process to Vest Rights for Land Use Permit Applicants](#), is scheduled for a public hearing before the Housing Committee on November 14, 2023.

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- This legislation is intended to reduce risk for housing creators by providing certainty and predictability in the land use permitting process by locking in a land use ordinance on the date the application is submitted.
  - By providing certainty to a housing creator, this legislation would reduce risk, lower housing costs by reducing overall costs, and incentivize small and local developers to help meet Maine's housing shortage needs.
  - The current landscape is so risk-heavy that it risks driving out small housing creators when only deep-pocketed ones can afford to engage in such a high-risk/high-reward scenario. Unfortunately, many of those deep-pocketed developers are out of state.
- MEREDA urges the Housing Committee to support LD 772, and we look forward to sharing our concept with the Housing Committee. We believe this bill will help keep Maine housing local, ease the risk burden of permitting land use projects, and lower soft costs that drive up housing prices.

## **MEREDA Local Issues Committee Working with Coalition of Developers on Portland's Recode; Community Focus on Housing Policies**

- MEREDA will join a group of local developers and housing creators to meet with the City of Portland to discuss its current proposal for Recode, which include changes to the definitions, uses, and zones in the current land use ordinance. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the realities of engaging with the land use code as a practitioner and to encourage flexibility in certain standards to promote innovative development and design.
- The MEREDA Local Issues Committee is moving forward with a project to help raise up the housing creation landscape for specific communities. The intent of this project is to create a dialogue between MEREDA and key local communities as well as to understand how existing and proposed policies will or will not help alleviate the current housing crisis in that community, and in Maine broadly. This work will continue through next year, and we look forward to engaging MEREDA members in the conversation.

**MEREDA will continue to remain diligent in protecting its members' interests.** Our members represent a critical pillar of the state economy, and we will continue to advocate for policies that are fair, practical, and predictable. We encourage all those who are interested in rolling up their sleeves and helping to further MEREDA's mission and vision in policymaking to contact Shelly R. Clark, MEREDA's Executive Director at [info@mereda.org](mailto:info@mereda.org).