



Maine Real Estate &  
Development Association

**Supporting Responsible Development**

## Local Issues Committee Ramps Up in Opposition to Rent Stabilization, Inclusionary Zoning

July 13, 2022

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Following on the heels of a legislative session in which housing advocates united around the need to fix the supply shortage in Maine's residential housing market, many towns and cities around the state have started proposing legislation that will effectively do the opposite. **South Portland recently adopted an eviction moratorium and rent freeze** while considering a permanent rent stabilization ordinance. **Brunswick has adopted a development moratorium** impacting projects over 30 units and including provisions that are effectively inclusionary zoning. At the same time, the **Portland Democratic Socialists of America are proposed a referendum to change the City's rent control ordinance** to be more favorable to tenants.

The MEREDA Local Issues Committee has provided comment on these proposals and is working with the South Portland and Brunswick City and Town Council as well as a Portland coalition in opposition to the DSA. **We will continue to share our message that the only way to solve Maine's housing crisis is to solve the supply shortage.** To do that, we **must accelerate housing creation, not enact regulations that will have a chilling effect on housing creation.**

We encourage all MEREDA members to keep an eye out for activities in their towns and cities and to alert the Local Issues Committee when something arises that threatens housing creators. In the meantime, we will continue ramping up efforts to educate local leaders and advocates on how best to ensure access to affordable and attainable housing for all Mainers.

### **Portland Ballot to Have 13 Referendum Questions this November**

This fall, Portland voters will be asked to support or oppose 13 referendum questions. As recently noted by our friends at the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce (PRCC), these 13 questions will include provisions that would:

- Institute the 3rd highest minimum wage in the country, behind only two communities in California.

- Eliminate the tipped credit, which would imperil Portland's world-renowned food and beverage industry by dramatically increasing restaurant prices and harming employees that currently make over \$40/hr in tips.
- Double down on the failed rent control policy, which has invited the largest rent increases in our city's history while discouraging investment in our city's housing stock.
- Eliminate cruise ships from Portland, threatening the revenues that make our small business community and working waterfront viable.
- Drastically reduce the number of short-term rentals in Portland, punishing local homeowners trying to make ends meet and pay ever increasing property taxes.
- Install a boss mayor in Portland, who could override the democratic will of our elected City Council with a veto pen, hire and fire city staff, issue executive orders, all while receiving a double-digit pay increase over the current mayoral salary.

**MEREDA is working closely with the PRCC and other allies to build opposition to the proposals and begin getting out the word to voters.** With early voting taking a more prominent role in election process, we will need to move quickly and collectively if we are to succeed in defeating this radical agenda, and in building momentum against referenda as a governance method – it's bad for Portland, and it's bad for Maine.

The order and language of the questions has not yet been set. **We will send more information along soon, and please keep an eye on your inboxes for ways you can help get involved in this fight.**

