



January 20, 2010

Senator Deborah Simpson, Chair  
Representative Stephen Beaudette, Chair  
Members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government  
State of Maine Legislature

**Re: Testimony in SUPPORT of LD 1569, An Act to Clarify the Informed Growth Act**

Dear Sen. Simpson, Rep, Beaudette and members of the State and Local Government Committee:

I am here today to testify in SUPPORT of LD 1569, An Act to Clarify the Informed Growth Act. Additionally, we feel that the current economic climate supports the “emergency” designation given to the bill.

The Maine Merchants Association, founded in 1933, represents the retailers and merchants of Maine. When the economy is better, our industry employs approximately 93,000 Mainers. However, more recently, Maine’s retail sector is employing approximately 87,000 Mainers. That difference of 6,000 jobs is direct evidence of the challenge Maine’s merchants are facing – they simply cannot employ as many people until the economy recovers.

LD 1569 would make that recovery a little quicker and put some vacant properties to better use sooner. This proposed change simply allows that the requirements of the Informed Growth Act would only apply to new construction and make it easier for a new retailer to occupy an existing vacant retail space. Additionally, this small change to the informed growth act may be enough incentive for a retailer who is trying to decide between new constructions or moving into a vacant space to decide to utilize the vacant space.

We strongly urge the committee to vote this bill unanimously ought-to-pass.

Sincerely,

Curtis Picard  
Executive Director  
Maine Merchants Association