



## Testimony In Opposition to H.B. 1496

Chairman Alexander, Vice Chairman Cole, and honorable members of the Standing Committee on Housing, my name is Jennifer Hawkins, President and CEO of Avesta Housing. Avesta is the largest nonprofit affordable housing developer in Northern New England. We own and manage over 3,000 affordable homes across New Hampshire and Maine with nearly 4,700 residents.

Avesta is offering testimony in opposition to **H.B. 1496 “An act repealing the cap on residential parking spaces”**. H.B. 1496 repeals the law passed by the legislature last year to reduce parking requirements to a 1:1 ratio. By requiring no more than one parking space per housing unit, New Hampshire reduces the cost of construction and provides flexibility to developers regarding how much on-site parking to provide prospective residents.

Avesta aims to provide adequate parking at our developments. We construct parking to meet demand, even if it exceeds the parking required by law. On the other hand, before the passage of the 1:1 ratio law, we have overbuilt parking to meet town requirements that far exceed demand. For example, some towns require 1.5 or 2 spaces per housing unit. For some sites, we have been forced to construct fewer housing units than zoning would otherwise allow because we could not fit the required parking. Inflexible and excessive requirements result in a limited resource (i.e., land) being used for parking rather than homes for Granite Staters.

We strongly encourage the committee to reject H.B. 1496 and keep the 1:1 ratio passed last year. It is also worth noting that after New Hampshire passed the 1:1 ratio, Maine passed a similar law. As a developer that works in both states, it is good to see consistency. New Hampshire has been a national leader on housing, and H.B. 1496 would backslide on the progress made. At a time when housing remains a top concern for New Hampshire residents, the legislature should find additional ways to support housing construction rather than curtail progress made.

Thank you for your time and please let us know if we can answer any questions.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Hawkins  
President and CEO