



MAINE AFFORDABLE HOUSING COALITION

Joint Standing Committee on Housing & Economic Development

Testimony of Laura Mitchell, Executive Director, Maine Affordable Housing Coalition, 3.18.25

in favor of LD698 – An Act to Sustain Emergency Homeless Shelters in Maine.

Sponsored by Senator Talbot Ross

Hello, Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development.

My name is Laura Mitchell. I am the Executive Director of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition. MAHC is a nonprofit with 140 member organizations working to create and preserve affordable homes in our state.

MAHC is in favor of LD698 that will provide a minimal increase in the funding for emergency shelters to meet inflation and cost increases since the funding was capped in 2016.

According to MaineHousing, in 2016 when the state's nightly Shelter Operating subsidy for was set at \$7 per bed night, there were 1,200 Maine people experiencing homelessness. Last year, there were 2,700 people in need of shelter. Emergency shelters are struggling to meet these growing needs, let alone stay open on the State's flat operating funding over the last 8 years.

MaineHousing reports that a shelter bed in Maine costs \$102 a night to operate. Maine's emergency shelters have faced rising costs from inflation and had to expand services to keep communities safe. **LD 698 will right size the State's Shelter Operating subsidy to \$18 a bed per night, helping to ensure Maine's emergency shelters remain open.**

While nobody grows up planning to stay in a homeless shelter, shelters are a necessary part of the housing continuum when people face employment, medical, and other emergencies that leave them without a place to call home.

The rising cost of rents and homeownership compared with wages in Maine is leaving more and more people vulnerable to experiencing homelessness. **While the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition knows building and preserving affordable housing is the solution to many of Maine's challenges, the coalition also recognizes that emergency shelters are a vital link in getting people into homes.**

We ask you to support LD698 to keep Maine's emergency shelters open as we work to address Maine's long term housing production goals. **The alternative is more costly emergency room, jail, and medical interventions that the State will be responsible for.**

Thank you for considering this investment in maintaining access to vital emergency housing in Maine.

3i Housing of Maine
55 Weston Avenue
AARP Maine
ABG Consulting, Gray
Acorn Engineering, Inc.
Allied Cook Construction, Portland
Anew Development LLC, Portland
Apartments for People LLC, Belfast
Archetype Architects, Portland
Associated General Contractors of Maine
Auburn Housing Authority
Augusta Housing Authority
Avesta Housing, Portland
Bangor Area Homeless Shelter
Bangor Housing
Bangor Savings Bank
Bank of New Hampshire, Falmouth
Bath Housing
Bath Savings Institution
Belknap Enterprise
Benchmark Construction, Westbrook
Boston Financial Investment Management
Bowman Constructors, Newport
Brunswick Housing Authority
Camden National Bank
Carpenter Associates
Catholic Charities of Maine
CEI, Brunswick
CHK Architecture, Portland
City of Portland Department of Housing
Clark Insurance, Portland
Community Concepts, Lewiston
Community Housing of Maine, Portland
Consigli Construction Co., Inc.
Cooperative Development Institute, South Freeport
Cooperative Fund of the Northeast
CREA, LLC
Credent Associates, Westbrook
Cross Financial Corp., Portland
Cumberland County
Cushman & Wakefield, Portland
CWS Architects, Portland
Developers Collaborative, Portland
Development Services of New England, Freeport
Dovetail Consulting
DrummondWoodsum, Portland
Ducas Construction, Inc.
Dunbar & Brawn Construction
Eagle Point Development, LLC
Eaton Peabody Consulting Group, Augusta
Eric Burmeister
Evernorth, Portland
Falmouth, Town of
Fort Fairfield Residential Development Corp.
Four Directions Development Corporation, Orono
Freeport Community Services
Freeport Housing Trust
Furniture Friends
Gannett Construction, Augusta
Gawron Turgeon Architects, Scarborough
Genesis Community Loan Fund, Brunswick
Gorham Savings Bank
Great Falls Construction, Gorham
Grommes Pulaski Consulting LLC, Portland
Gorham, Maine
Habitat for Humanity of Greater Portland
Habitat for Humanity York County
Hick Lumber, Casco
Healthy Androscoquin, Lewiston
Hebert Construction
Home Start, Peaks Island
Homeless Voices for Justice, Portland
Housing Foundation, Orono
Housing Initiatives of New England, Portland
Housing Partnership, Portsmouth, NH
Hunt Capital Partners LLC, El Paso, TX
Island Institute, Rockland
Islesboro Affordable Property
Jensen Baird Gardner & Henry, Portland
John Antor, Consultant, Portland
Kaplan Thompson Architects, Portland
Kennebec Savings Bank, Augusta
Kennebec Valley Community Action, Waterville
Kennebunk Savings
KeyBank
Knox County Homeless Coalition
Lake City Investments, LLC
Landry/French Construction, Scarborough
Lasselle Consulting, LLC, Augusta
Lasselle Architects, South Berwick
LB Development Partners, Portland
LeadingAge Maine & New Hampshire
Lewiston Housing Authority
M&T Bank
Machias Savings Bank
Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services
Maine Community Action Partnership
Maine Community Bank
Maine Department of Health & Human Services
Maine Equal Justice
Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition
Maine Public Health Association
Maine Real Estate Managers Association
Maine State Building & Construction Trades
Maine Workforce Housing LLC, Portland
Mana en Mana, Millbridge
Mans Development LLC, Yarmouth
Mascoma Bank
Midcoast Regional Housing Trust
NBT Bank
Nickerson & O'Day, Inc., Bangor
North Haven Sustainable Housing
Norway Savings Bank
Old Town Housing Authority
One Awell C/A's, South Portland
Penobscot General Constructors
Penguins, Bangor
Perrin's United Bank
PM Construction
Portland Builders
Portland Housing Authority
Preti Property, Portland
Preble Street, Portland
Preservation Management, South Portland
Preti Property, Portland
Raise-Op Housing Cooperative, Lewiston
Realty Resources Management
Rental Housing Alliance of Southern Maine
Rick Whiting
Rumford, Town of
Sanford Housing Authority
Scott Simons Architects, Portland
Sea Coast Management Company, Topsham
Shelton House, Portland
Silver Street Development Corporation, Portland
South Portland Housing Authority
Southwest Group, Yarmouth
St. Germain
Sunrise Opportunities, Machias
S.W. Cole Engineering, Gray
Santano Company
TD Bank
Tedford Housing, Brunswick
The Caleb Group, Saco
The Eagle Point Companies, South Portland
The Housing Foundation
The Park Danforth, Portland
Thornton Tomasetti, Portland
Through These Doors, Portland
Total Construction Management, Winterport
TPD Construction Co., Sanford
United Way of Greater Portland
Utile, Inc.
Veterans Inc., Lewiston
Volunteers of America of Northern NE
Washington County Assoc for Ret. Citizens
Westbrook Housing Authority
Western Maine Community Action, E. Wilton
Winton Scott Architects
Wishcamper Companies, Portland
WNC & Associates
Wright-Ryan Construction, Portland
Yarmouth Housing Collaborative
Year-Round Housing Corp., Long Island
York County Community Action, Sanford
York Housing Authority
Zachos Construction, Freeport
Zero Energy Design
Zion Energy Services