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An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Support the Independence of Maine's Seniors

Preamble. Two thirds of both Houses of the Legislature deeming it necessary in accordance with the Constitution of Maine, Article IX, Section 14 to authorize the issuance of bonds on behalf of the State of Maine to provide funds as described in this Act,

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. Authorization of bonds. The Treasurer of State is authorized, under the direction of the Governor, to issue bonds in the name and on behalf of the State in an amount not exceeding \$50,000,000 for the purposes described in section 5 of this Act. The bonds are a pledge of the full faith and credit of the State. The bonds may not run for a period longer than 10 years from the date of the original issue of the bonds.

Sec. 2. Records of bonds issued; Treasurer of State. The Treasurer of State shall ensure that an account of each bond is kept showing the number of the bond, the name of the successful bidder to whom sold, the amount received for the bond, the date of sale and the date when payable.

Sec. 3. Sale; how negotiated; proceeds appropriated. The Treasurer of State may negotiate the sale of the bonds by direction of the Governor, but no bond may be loaned, pledged or hypothecated on behalf of the State. The proceeds of the sale of the bonds, which must be held by the Treasurer of State and paid by the Treasurer of State upon warrants drawn by the State Controller, are appropriated solely for the purposes set forth in this Act. Any unencumbered balances remaining at the completion of the project in this Act lapse to the Office of the Treasurer of State to be used for the retirement of general obligation bonds.

Sec. 4. Interest and debt retirement. The Treasurer of State shall pay interest due or accruing on any bonds issued under this Act and all sums coming due for payment of bonds at maturity.

Sec. 5. Disbursement of bond proceeds from General Fund bond issue. The proceeds of the sale of the bonds authorized under this Act must be expended as designated in the following schedule under the direction and supervision of the agencies and entities set forth in this section.

MAINE STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY

Provides funds to be used to leverage an estimated \$75,000,000 in private and other funds for the construction of new energy-efficient affordable multifamily housing for low-income households headed by a person 55 years of age or older and the adaptive reuse of existing structures for multifamily housing for low-income households headed by a person 55 years of age or older. Preference must be given to housing in locations that have access to health care services and other

essential goods and services. Funds must also provide a vehicle for a local transportation provider serving each facility to meet the needs of facility residents and their neighbors. At least one housing facility must be located in each county.

Total \$40,000,000

Provides funds to be used to match private and other funds for the rehabilitation of existing affordable senior housing facilities.

Total \$5,000,000

Provides funds to be used to match private and other funds for home repair and weatherization programs that assist low-income seniors.

Total \$5,000,000

Sec. 6. Contingent upon ratification of bond issue. Sections 1 to 5 do not become effective unless the people of the State ratify the issuance of the bonds as set forth in this Act.

Sec. 7. Appropriation balances at year-end. At the end of each fiscal year, all unencumbered appropriation balances representing state money carry forward. Bond proceeds that have not been expended within 10 years after the date of the sale of the bonds lapse to the Office of the Treasurer of State to be used for the retirement of general obligation bonds.

Sec. 8. Bonds authorized but not issued. Any bonds authorized but not issued within 5 years of ratification of this Act are deauthorized and may not be issued, except that the Legislature may, within 2 years after the expiration of that 5-year period, extend the period for issuing any remaining unissued bonds for an additional amount of time not to exceed 5 years.

Sec. 9. Referendum for ratification; submission at election; form of question; effective date. This Act must be submitted to the legal voters of the State at a statewide election held in the month of November following passage of this Act. The municipal officers of this State shall notify the inhabitants of their respective cities, towns and plantations to meet, in the manner prescribed by law for holding a statewide election, to vote on the acceptance or rejection of this Act by voting on the following question:

"Do you favor a \$50,000,000 bond issue to support energy-efficient housing for low-income seniors through the construction of new multifamily housing, the adaptive reuse of existing structures for multifamily housing, the rehabilitation of affordable senior housing and the repair and weatherization of existing homes, which will create jobs and will be matched by an estimated \$75,000,000 in private and other funds?"

The legal voters of each city, town and plantation shall vote by ballot on this question and designate their choice by a cross or check mark placed within a corresponding square below the word "Yes" or "No." The ballots must be received, sorted, counted and declared in open ward, town and plantation meetings and returns made to the Secretary of State in the same manner as votes for members of the Legislature. The Governor shall review the returns. If a majority of the legal votes are cast in favor of this Act, the Governor shall proclaim the result without delay and this Act becomes effective 30 days after the date of the proclamation.

The Secretary of State shall prepare and furnish to each city, town and plantation all ballots, returns and copies of this Act necessary to carry out the purposes of this referendum.

SUMMARY

The funds provided by this bond issue, in the amount of \$50,000,000, will be used to assist in the provision of energy-efficient affordable multifamily housing to low-income Maine seniors. Forty million dollars of the bond proceeds will be used to construct new multifamily housing for seniors and to adaptively reuse existing structures to provide multifamily housing for seniors. At least one housing facility will be located in each of Maine's 16 counties. Preference will be given to housing locations that have access to health care services and other essential goods and services. Five million dollars will be used to rehabilitate existing affordable senior housing facilities. Five million dollars will provide for home repair and weatherization of the existing homes of low-income seniors. The bond proceeds will leverage an estimated \$75,000,000 in private and other funds.