

Debora Keller  
Bath Housing  
LD 3

Good afternoon,

As we wrap up one of the last week's of the year, I pull together highlights of the year for our staff and board. While there is a long list of good things to share, the biggest news is that we responded to DOUBLE the requests for housing that we have seen in prior years. When you call Bath Housing, you will get a call back. We help walk people through options for long-term, stable housing. Often, the job of our team is just to tell someone nicely that there are no options. Sometimes we have to feel OK knowing that we answered the call and treated the person with dignity while telling them the wait for housing would be 2 - 5 years.

Bath Housing is a small, Midcoast organization with just 175 apartments under management. We provide heat and electricity to residents lucky enough to live in one of our housing units. But we talk to 400+ families a year that need housing. At least 24 of these families are without current shelter right now. And through Comfortably Home, our home modification program for older adults, we are in homes throughout Sagadahoc County to help people thrive in their homes as they age. With these programs, I feel like we have our finger on the pulse of the needs in the region. And the needs are extraordinary right now.

I am heartened that you are holding this public hearing on LD3. We cannot afford to pass on this opportunity to provide emergency relief. It is going to be a tragic winter for so many Mainers, one that we have the ability to mitigate right now if we can come together and get past partisanship.

Please support LD3 immediately to offer relief to families this winter. Given 8.7% inflation, massive increases in utility costs, the end of rent relief, the lack of housing options, and the lack of consistent childcare (and school) due to staff shortages and illness, families at a wide range of incomes are struggling right now. In my 30 year career, I have never seen anything like this.