

Good Morning Members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee,

My name is Tracy Cunningham and I am an employee of the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation, Bureau of Insurance. I have been a State of Maine employee for over 20 years and am testifying/writing on my own time as a private citizen. I am writing to express my concerns regarding the lack of funding and general upkeep of State office buildings, especially leased spaces. In 20 years I have experienced repeated and ongoing water intrusion, heating issues, lack of cleanliness, mold, asbestos, general disrepair of old windows, crumbling exterior and the list goes on. Poor air quality has sent employees to the e.r. and forced others to work from home. We've had to endure comments from the public and insurance professionals regarding the general disrepair of the building. Staff have made repeated complaints and yet the lease continues to be renewed. Recently we were temporarily moved out of that location when asbestos was discovered and mold remediation began while employees were still in the office. We were moved to a State owned building that is in even worse disrepair. It is beyond time that the State start investing in their employees' health and well being by providing them with safe and healthy work spaces.

Lastly, it is time for the State to invest in the future of their workforce. As one of, if not the largest, employers in the State, it is time to pay its current and future employees a fair wage. Several years ago a pay study was completed for the Professional/Technical work units that has yet to be funded. Many employees continue to be paid less than their counterparts in the Administrative units who are on a lower pay scale and of those in the private sector. Hiring and retaining skilled workers has become increasingly difficult due to the ongoing pay disparities. Please provide much needed funding to ensure the citizens of the State of Maine continue to receive all of the services they deserve.

Thank you,
Tracy Cunningham