

March 21, 2023

Senator Chip Curry, Senate Chair
Representative Tiffany Roberts, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business
100 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0100

Re: *LD 787, An Act to Create the New Maine Resident Service Coordination Program in the Department of Economic and Community Development*

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and Members of the IDEAB Committee;

Please accept this letter from the Greater Portland Council of Governments (GPCOG) in support of *LD 787, An Act to Create the New Maine Resident Service Coordination Program in the Department of Economic and Community Development*.

GPCOG serves 25 municipal members in Cumberland County, from Sebago Lake to Casco Bay, as well as Saco, Biddeford, Arundel, and Old Orchard Beach through the Portland Area Comprehensive Transportation System (PACTS). We deliver transportation, land use, sustainability, and economic development services to our members and their communities.

In recent years our member municipalities have asked GPCOG to help with an increasing number of unhoused people in need of shelter and services. Since 2019, when the Portland Expo was filled with people arriving in our region, we have supported our municipal members, especially Portland and South Portland, as they provided extraordinary support to a growing number of unhoused people, including many asylum seekers.

Our entire region is impacted today by the continuing arrival of people in need. Municipal resources have been stretched to the breaking point, and beyond. Our members need help.

LD 787 proposes the creation of a New Maine Resident Service Coordination Program to be housed at DECD. The bill aligns well with proposals from many of our member communities, calling on the state to take on a greater role in finding housing and providing services to newly arriving people.

LD 787's passage would provide essential relief to many municipalities, including many in our region, who have done so much to support new arrivals. The bill will also greatly benefit newly arriving people directly with consolidated services and shelter options that local communities cannot provide on their own.

For these reasons we urge you to support passage of LD 787. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Kristina Egan
Executive Director
Greater Portland Council of Governments

Helping communities thrive and prosper in the Greater Portland and Lakes Region

970 Baxter Blvd., Suite 201 • Portland, Maine, 04103 • Tel. (207) 774-9891 • www.gpcog.org