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Mark O'Brien - Augusta
Alan Casavant - Biddeford
Carl Sheline - Lewiston
Kate Snyder - Portland



MAINE MAYORS COALITION

Strengthening Our Cities & Our State

Louise MacLellan-Ruf - Rockland
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**Maine Mayors Coalition
Testimony in Support of LD 2
An Act to End Chronic Homelessness by Creating the Housing First Fund**

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere and distinguished members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing, the Maine Mayors Coalition writes in support of Speaker Talbot Ross's amendment to LD 2, An Act to End Chronic Homelessness by Creating the Housing First Fund.

The Maine Mayors Coalition is a nonpartisan group representing the mayors of ten Maine communities – Auburn, Augusta, Biddeford, Lewiston, Portland, Rockland, Saco, Sanford, South Portland and Westbrook – and more than 260,000 residents. The Coalition advocates on behalf of our citizens and municipalities for policies that recognize the vital services Maine cities provide and the positive impact Maine cities have on our state. The Coalition seeks to work in partnership with state and federal elected officials to meet the needs of Maine people.

Maine's housing crisis directly impacts each of our cities, and housing is top of mind for all of us. Every day we see the human and economic consequences that come from the lack of housing supply and the rising costs of homes and rents.

Our cities are working to find ways we can help preserve existing affordable housing and develop new affordable housing. Both are critical for our cities – and our state – to thrive. In our capacity as mayors, we're engaging with community members and partners to foster ideas and advance solutions at the local level.

As you're well aware, an unfortunate consequence of our housing crisis is an increase in homelessness. Cities of all sizes are seeing their homeless populations increase. Many are at or near capacity. Though unhoused populations may be larger in our cities, homelessness is not specific to us. Sadly, communities all across the state are experiencing it as well.

As mayors, our most immediate concerns are finding housing for people who need it now and providing them with essential support. Speaker Talbot Ross's amendment, which will provide services and shelter to individuals who have been chronically homeless, will help us address these concerns for a specific population of people experiencing homelessness. It will help alleviate some of the pressures now placed on our staffs as well as on our budgets for general assistance, first responders and other critical services.

The Maine Mayors Coalition thanks Speaker Talbot Ross and the members of this Committee for your continuing work on this very important issue.