

To the Appropriations & Financial Affairs Committee:

I am writing in the strongest possible support of LD 912: An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Restore Historic Community Buildings and LD 1163: An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue for Capital Improvements for Arts and Cultural Facilities. Funding from these bond issues will help preserve and protect Maine's rich cultural legacy and fabric and propel it well into the future. The culture of Maine is what makes Maine the unique and special place that it is.

There are communities in Washington County that have lost a great deal of population (Calais, 50%; Lubec, 50%; Eastport, 75%). With these sort of losses, have come losses to the region's cultural legacy, historic buildings have been destroyed, countless artifacts have been taken out of the region. We have spent the past 21 years rebuilding parts of Washington County's cultural legacy. Many others are doing the same sort of work here on a smaller scale. We own nine historic buildings in Eastport and Washington County that otherwise would have been torn down. We have brought thousands of cultural artifacts back to Washington County and have kept thousands more cultural artifacts in Washington County. We have raised and invested several million dollars in restoring our buildings and securing and returning cultural artifacts. But we need to raise and invest several million dollars more to complete this work.

The funding from the two bond issues under consideration by the Committee represent a critically needed down payment to keep Maine the unique and special place that it is.

Sincerely,

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