

Testimony In Support of LD 460, *An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Improve Student Success and Workforce Readiness Within the University of Maine System*
From Aidan Mulrooney, University of Maine at Farmington Student Representative to the Board of Trustees - April 26, 2023

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs and distinguished members of the Committee on Appropriations & Financial Affairs: My name is Aidan Mulrooney and I serve as the University of Maine at Farmington Student Representative to the Board of Trustees. I am testifying today in **support of LD 460, the \$100 million infrastructure bond for the University of Maine System.**

As a third-generation UMF student majoring in history, I understand the value of our oldest campus. That being said, two-thirds of UMF buildings have not been renovated in at least 50 years and may have gone much longer without improvement. While this adds to the historic charm of our downtown campus, renovation is critically necessary now to bring the quality of our classrooms, accommodations and other student and community spaces closer to the quality of our education and experience.

As you have heard, UMF would use its portion of the investment proposed by LD 460 to modernize residence halls, which are essential to attracting students to Farmington, where enrollment has been fast falling to the point that last year, there were faculty retrenchments. This includes improvements to Scott Hall North and South, built in the 1960s and relatively unchanged since.

The current condition of Scott Hall and other campus facilities have motivated students to transfer to other colleges or to move off campus. More than 50 years of wear and tear have resulted in flickering lights, damaged siding, dead outlets, windows that don't lock, and inconsistent heating and cooling. The former is obviously a harm to the institution and its ability to serve the state including preparing the teacher workforce; the latter fractures the campus culture, which challenges the ability of the institution to provide the experiences and supports that keep students at our institution and ensure they are most successful while drawing future young people to Farmington.

I am grateful for my UMF education and the opportunities I have been provided through the university, including to represent the student body to Trustees and to work in the local community. However, I am concerned that the campus facilities haven't been modernized since my parents and even grandparents attended and what that means for the future of Farmington. For this reason, I urge your support of LD 460 and other needed investments in Maine's public universities.

Thank you kindly for your previous support of the University of Maine System, and public education writ large. I look forward to answering your questions.