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MAINE MAYORS COALITION

Strengthening Our Cities & Our State

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**Maine Mayors Coalition
Testimony in Support of LD 1721
An Act to Create Transitional Housing Communities for Homeless Populations in the State**

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere and distinguished members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing, the Maine Mayors Coalition submits testimony in support of LD 1721, An Act to Create Transitional Housing Communities for Homeless Populations in the State.

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.

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 providing housing and essential support to people who need it. Creating a program to develop housing and offer services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness and to assist them in their transition to permanent housing, as proposed in this bill, will help us address both these concerns. It also will alleviate some of the pressures now placed on our staffs as well as on our budgets for general assistance, first responders, school systems and other critical services.

We're in the process now of finalizing our budgets. To that end, we have been scrutinizing every program and expenditure in an effort to keep our cities' property taxes as low as possible while continuing to meet the needs of our citizens. As always, state funds and programs to assist our cities in supporting our unhoused citizens would be greatly appreciated, especially at this time.

Thank you, again, for all your work on this issue.