

Doug Dunbar
Hermon
LD 2214

Dear AFA Committee Members:

How much rain has to fall, and who must get rained on, before state leaders turn to the Rainy Day fund to bring about transformative change through unprecedented investments? The state's reserves have never been larger, while some of our crises have never been more severe. Something is terribly wrong.

It's my understanding funding originally in LDs 2136 and 2138 will be considered by your Committee today or in the near future. The money is urgently needed to maintain the state's very limited shelter capacity for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. There have likely never been more Mainers without housing. You can vote to ensure that a safety net--which is far from adequate--remains in place.

The request won't allow shelters to meaningfully expand capacity. It will simply help to keep current services in place. This is an enormous crisis. If you haven't visited a shelter recently, please schedule a time to meet with administrators and staff. Importantly, talk with individuals receiving services. This should be a priority for all AFA Committee members.

Without shelter, it's incredibly difficult, often impossible, for individuals and families to address other life needs. Try seeking employment without housing. Good luck. How about receiving health care, obtaining medication and staying on a treatment plan without housing? Not likely. Going to school or taking any other steps to improve life circumstances is profoundly hindered without housing.

Please don't allow Maine's relatively few shelters to be diminished or close--particularly when there have never been larger surpluses and enormous funds awaiting a 'Rainy Day'. It's been pouring on our unhoused neighbors for years. Shelter cutbacks and closures are very likely outcomes if you don't act. Your support of shelter funding is essential. Stand with some of our most vulnerable neighbors. Do not turn your back.

Thanks for your time and consideration of this urgent request.

Sincerely,

Doug Dunbar
2284 Union Street
Hermon, Maine 04401
(207) 299-5626