

**Testimony for the Committee Appropriations and Financial Affairs
April 1, 2024**

Regarding LD 2214, HP 1420: An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025



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Good afternoon, Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and esteemed members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs. Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Eric Meyer. I am President & CEO of Spurwink. At Spurwink, we provide behavioral health and educational services to children, adults, and families across Maine.

I am here to speak in support of LD2214, and in particular, Part A, Page 12, DECD, Business Development 0585 which provides funding for a one-time grant to a licensed provider of behavioral health services to prevent a significant disruption in a range of behavioral health services, including those provided to victims of the mass shooting, including in the Maine Resiliency Center, and other community residents as attested to in testimony before the Maine State Legislature prior to March 1, 2024.

I recognize that many behavioral health organizations will compete for this one-time grant funding and Spurwink as a potentially eligible behavioral health provider could benefit from these funds.

At Spurwink, we would use these one-time grant funds to support the rescue, averting the closure of Tri-County Mental Health Services in Lewiston. Tri-County is a nonprofit that serves over 2,000 behavioral health clients and employs 180 people. For seventy years, TCMHS has been a critical provider of mental health services in a community with limited service options and significant need. That need has never been more clear than in the wake of the recent mass shootings in Lewiston.

After being approached about acquiring TCMHS, Spurwink's Board and leadership rose to the challenge and committed to ensuring that these critical mental health services and employment continue in Lewiston. Without this rescue plan, Tri-County would be bankrupt and abruptly cease all services. This rescue plan is incredibly complex, challenging and costly. A typical process of this nature usually takes 9 to 18 months; in this case Spurwink has had less than 3 months to design a solution. In acquiring Tri-County as of today, April 1, Spurwink has assumed significant and immediate financial loss, with more losses in the coming fiscal year. However, we are confident that the shared goals of both organizations will be achieved: 165 jobs will be preserved and client services for over 2,000 community members will continue uninterrupted and be strengthened.

This funding is an essential step in maintaining critical mental health services and employment for mental health professionals in Lewiston and the surrounding communities. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

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