

Jeffrey Harmon - Auburn
Martin Grohman - Biddeford
Carl Sheline - Lewiston
Mark Dion - Portland
Penelope York - Rockland
Cara Pelletier - Bangor



Jodi MacPhail - Saco
Becky Brink - Sanford
Richard Matthews - South Portland
Michael Morris - Waterville
David Morse - Westbrook

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**Maine Mayors Coalition Testimony on LD 209
An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other
Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law
Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025**

Senator Rotundo and Representative Gattine, Senator Ingwersen and Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Health and Human Services, the Maine Mayors Coalition is providing testimony in opposition to Part S of LD 209.

The Maine Mayors Coalition is a nonpartisan group representing the mayors of eleven Maine communities – Auburn, Bangor, Biddeford, Lewiston, Portland, Rockland, Saco, Sanford, South Portland, Waterville and Westbrook – and nearly 300,000 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.

As mayors, our most immediate concerns are providing essential support and housing to people who need it now. You're well aware that Maine's General Assistance program provides a lifeline for many who find themselves in dire financial situations. Over the last several years, more people than ever are relying on the GA program due to the lack of housing supply, rising costs of homes and rents, and increased prices for food, clothing, energy and other essentials.

With these conditions expected to continue, limiting individuals and families to three months of housing assistance in a 12-month period could further exacerbate their already tenuous circumstances. The recent sub-zero weather forcefully reminds us all of the possibly dire consequences for vulnerable citizens, our cities and our entire State of these proposed restrictions on emergency housing. Securing housing would be even more difficult, pressures on shelters – already at capacity – would mount, and the State could end up seeing a spike in its unhoused population, not just in cities, but in communities across Maine.

Compounding the issue by limiting municipalities "from exceeding the maximum levels of assistance for all assistance categories" to no more than 30 days in a year would also negatively impact our ability to provide basic needs, especially housing. Without the necessary State funding that helps us do this work, these extra costs will be placed onto our homeowners and business owners who have continued to see property taxes rise.

We appreciate the work Governor Mills and the Legislature has undertaken to alleviate Maine's housing crisis. While it will take a few years to see the results of the State's efforts, we need to address these issues now. We urge you to vote against Part S and continue to work with us to support our most vulnerable citizens. Thank you for your time.