



# WISHCAMPER

43°N 70°W

We invest in affordable housing and renewable energy throughout the US.

## Testimony of Lyndel J. Wishcamper and The Wishcamper Companies

### In support of LD 146 An Act to Increase the Maximum Amount of the Historic Property Rehabilitation Tax Credit That May be Taken in a Year

Senator Grohoski and Representative Cloutier, and all members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation, my name is Lyndel J. Wishcamper and I am the writing to you as both a member of the real estate development community in the state of Maine and the owner of The Wishcamper Companies.

I founded The Wishcamper Companies in the 1970s, starting with a 50-unit subsidized housing project in Biddeford, Maine. This project laid the foundation for a nationwide business. Over 59 years, I have developed over 20,000 affordable housing units in 24 states using various tax credits and federal programs. These incentives are crucial for encouraging private investment in affordable housing, especially now when costs are high and the housing crisis is severe. Initiatives like LD 146 are essential for filling funding gaps and increasing the supply of safe, decent housing.

Supporting the efforts to expand the historic rehabilitation credit in LD146 in the Maine State Legislature is crucial for several reasons:

1. The existing Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (HRTC) program has already demonstrated significant positive outcomes. In its first 10 years, it generated \$525 million in construction investment, rehabilitated 3.6 million square feet of space, and created or preserved 1,911 housing units, including 1,300 affordable units. This bill aims to expand upon an already successful program.
2. The proposed bill would allow investors to take credits earlier in the deal and reduce their overall debt, allowing for larger more viable projects. This change could lead to more significant investments in historic properties, close the financing gap for existing deals and have the added benefit of generating more jobs and tax revenue.
3. Addressing inflation: Construction costs have doubled since the program's initiation in 2008, but the cap has remained the same. Increasing the cap would account for these rising costs and make more projects, including our own project in a Senior/Disabled building in downtown Portland, more affordable.
4. Affordable housing support: The expansion of the HRTC program aligns with the state's goal to increase affordable housing and in combination with the Low Income Housing Tax Credit can bolster the construction of new affordable housing in Maine.
5. HRTC projects have added over \$166 million to local property tax rolls and generated \$19 million in new income and sales tax revenues since 2008- this program already funds itself.

By supporting LD146, Maine can enhance an already successful program, stimulate economic growth, preserve historic properties, and address critical housing needs across the state.

Sincerely,

Lyndel J. Wishcamper, The Wishcamper Companies