

Tim Blair  
Bath  
LD 698

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and esteemed members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee,

My name is Tim Blair, and I live in Bath, Maine.

I'm writing you in support of LD 698: An Act to Sustain Emergency Homeless Shelters in Maine. Maine's emergency shelters provide critical care and services to vulnerable individuals and families. Shelters across Maine are already struggling to match the need, leaving far too many people no choice but to sleep outside and in places not meant for human habitation. If even one shelter closes, it will strain an already overburdened system and worsen this crisis, leaving more people to compete for fewer resources, including shelter beds, housing navigators, and critical life-saving services.

I understand that a shelter bed in Maine costs \$102 a night to operate, yet the current state's Shelter Operating Subsidy only provides Maine emergency shelters with \$7 a bed per night, and it's been this way for 9 years. Meanwhile Maine's emergency shelters have faced rising costs from inflation and had to expand services to keep communities safe during the pandemic.

LD 698 will critically increase this contribution to \$18 a bed per night, helping to ensure Maine's emergency shelters remain open, accessible, and professionally operated.

Maine needs and deserves safe and accessible emergency shelters that can meet the needs of the growing number of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in our state. LD 698 will help to make this a reality.

Thank you.