



Executive Director



Diane Small

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State of Maine - 132nd Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development
Testimony of Diane Small on behalf of Sanford Housing (Sanford, Maine)
March 17, 2025

Supporting:

LD698, "An Act to Sustain Emergency Homeless Shelters in Maine"

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

My name is Diane Small and I am the Executive Director of Sanford Housing Authority, and I am testifying on behalf of Sanford Housing in strong support of LD698, An Act to Sustain Emergency Homeless Shelters in Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to present on this critical issue.

At Sanford Housing, our mission is to provide stable, affordable housing opportunities for individuals and families in need. However, the persistent shortfall in housing vouchers and affordable units makes it increasingly difficult to fulfill this mission. Every day, we see firsthand how the lack of emergency shelter impacts individuals who are waiting for long-term housing solutions. Without a safe place to stay, many of our community members experience worsening health, increased vulnerability to violence, and additional barriers to securing permanent housing. Emergency shelters serve as a vital bridge, preventing further destabilization while individuals wait for housing assistance.

A stable shelter network is essential for our work. Without adequate emergency shelter options in York County, many individuals and families will have nowhere to go. This would lead to increased homelessness on our streets, greater strain on hospitals and first responders, and additional pressure on an already overburdened housing system. Our ability to help people transition into stable housing depends on having a functioning shelter system that ensures individuals are safe while we work to secure them permanent housing solutions.

Please vote Ought to Pass on LD698. This legislation is crucial to sustaining Maine's emergency shelter network so that agencies like Sanford Housing can continue to focus on connecting individuals and families to stable, long-term housing.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Diane G. Small, Executive Director

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