



# Greater Androscoggin Humane Society

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[www.SavingPetsInMaine.org](http://www.SavingPetsInMaine.org)

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March 25, 2025

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### Testimony in Support of LD 824— An Act Regarding Pet Fees in Rental Housing

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

My name is Katie Lisnik and I am the Executive Director the Greater Androscoggin Humane Society in Lewiston. I am offering testimony in support of LD 824 on behalf of our shelter, which cares for close to 3000 homeless animals a year, and provides support services for several thousand more to be able to stay in homes where they are loved.

Lack of pet-inclusive housing is an all too common refrain at animal shelters when owners come in to surrender beloved pets. Looking at the data of my own shelter in Lewiston for the past year, close to 50% of our intake of owned animals was specifically noted as related to housing and lack of funds to keep the animals. Two other common reasons for surrender (too many animals and unexpected custody) often have an underlying housing issue as well. For example, an animal may be surrendered because of “too many pets” when an owner had to move and couldn’t find housing that would allow their large dog, or multiple cats.

Mainers are a pet-loving people and firmly believe that pets are part of the family. We consistently rank in the top two states for cat ownership rates, with approximately 50% of households owning at least one cat. National research has also shown that approximately 75% of renters own pets. Through the pandemic and now more than ever, our shelters have seen increased need across the board- Pet owners unable to afford basic pet food, veterinary care, and housing challenges.

In addition to a weekly pet food pantry, low-cost and free vaccine and microchip services, and low-cost spay/neuter clinics, we have a pilot, grant-funded program with the cities of Auburn and Lewiston to cover pet security deposits for families where that is the last barrier keeping them from a safe home. But we shouldn’t have to rely on a small grant to provide the only option for a family to keep their beloved animal companions.

We feel this bill will help to ease a significant burden many pet owners are currently facing. Overall, this bill has significant potential to help pets and the people who love them across our state. We encourage you to vote Ought To Pass on LD 824. Thank you for your consideration and the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

Katie Lisnik  
Executive Director