



**Humane  
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Animals™**

Formerly called the Humane Society  
of the United States



**HUMAN ANIMAL  
SUPPORT SERVICES**



Maine Housing and Economic Development Committee  
c/o Legislative Information Office  
100 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333

**Subject: Support for LD 824 – Addressing Pet Fees in Rental Housing**

Dear Chair Curry and Members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee,

The undersigned organizations write to express our strong support for LD 824, which seeks to establish reasonable limits on pet-related fees in rental housing. This bill is a crucial step toward ensuring that pet-owning renters are not unfairly burdened by excessive fees, which often force families to choose between their financial stability and keeping their beloved pets.

Nearly 97% of pet owners view their pets as family, and with most renters owning pets,<sup>i</sup> the demand for pet-friendly rental housing is high. However, a 2021 report by the Pet Inclusive Housing Initiative found that 72% of renters struggle to find pet-friendly housing, and 59% find it too expensive.<sup>ii</sup> Some housing providers, recognizing this demand and the strong bond between pet owners and their pets, capitalize on the situation by imposing additional fees to boost their revenue. As a result, pet-friendly units are often more expensive than non-pet-friendly ones, with lower-income and marginalized communities facing disproportionately higher costs to keep their pets at home.<sup>iii</sup>

The growing burden of excessive and often arbitrary pet-related fees, combined with rising rental costs, is making it increasingly difficult for renters to find affordable pet-friendly housing. Tenants with pets face both upfront and ongoing expenses, including refundable pet deposits, nonrefundable fees, monthly pet rent, and even sometimes additional charges for applications or background screenings.

On average, pet-owning renters pay **\$864** in combined deposits (including security and pet deposits), **\$244** in one-time pet fees, and **\$600** annually in pet rent.<sup>iv</sup> In Maine, tenants typically pay **\$209** in nonrefundable pet fees, **\$291** in refundable pet deposits, and **\$552** per year in pet rent—often charged per pet.

While rental properties are investments that owners have a right to protect, that same report showed that only **9% of pets cause any damage**, and in most cases, a tenant's security deposit is sufficient to cover necessary repairs.<sup>v</sup> These excessive fees disproportionately impact lower-income and marginalized communities, deepening housing insecurity. Given these realities, it is reasonable for the legislature to establish limits on the types and amounts of fees landlords can charge.

Additionally, animal shelters in Maine have seen a rise in pet relinquishments due to housing-related and financial barriers. The burden of pet deposits, monthly pet rent, and other non-refundable fees places undue strain on families who want to provide a loving home for their pets.

LD 824 proposes reasonable and balanced measures, such as capping pet deposits at \$300 and limiting monthly pet rent to 1% of the total monthly rent. These provisions protect landlords' investments while preventing unfair financial discrimination against pet owners. By passing this bill, Maine can improve housing accessibility, reduce pet relinquishment, and promote fair rental practices.

We urge you to support LD 824 and advocate for policies that reflect the needs of both tenants and landlords while fostering more inclusive and affordable housing opportunities.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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<sup>i</sup> Zillow, *Renters: Results from the Zillow Consumer Housing Trends Report 2023*, Accessed March 21, 2025, <https://www.zillow.com/research/renters-consumer-housing-trends-report-2023-33317/>

<sup>ii</sup> Michelson Found Animals, *2021 Pet-Inclusive Housing Report*, Accessed March 21, 2025, <https://www.petsandhousing.org/2021-pet-inclusive-housing-report/>

<sup>iii</sup> Applebaum JW, Horecka K, Loney L, Graham TM. Pet-Friendly for Whom? An Analysis of Pet Fees in Texas Rental Housing. *Front Vet Sci.* 2021 Nov 8;8:767149. doi: 10.3389/fvets.2021.767149. PMID: 34820439; PMCID: PMC8606550.

<sup>iv</sup> Michelson Found Animals, *2021 Pet-Inclusive Housing Report*, Accessed March 21, 2025, <https://www.petsandhousing.org/2021-pet-inclusive-housing-report/>.

<sup>v</sup> Ibid.