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**Joint Standing Committee on Taxation**

**Re: Support for LD1082: An Act to Invest in Maine's Families and Workforce by Amending the Real Estate Transfer Tax**

Dear Senator Grohoski, Representative Cloutier, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation,

My name is Emily Flinkstrom and I am the Executive Director of Fair Tide, a non-profit with over 25 years of providing deeply affordable housing and supportive services to people experiencing homelessness in the very southern part of our state. I also serve as a representative from Region One (York and Cumberland Counties) to the Statewide Homeless Council and am a member of several local committees and coalitions aimed at increasing affordable housing opportunities in southern Maine. I am writing to urge you to support LD 1082 to address the growing housing crisis throughout our great state.

While the State has invested significant funds and passed noteworthy laws to create more housing, we need additional resources to reach the 80,000+ units necessary to meet demand. The astronomical cost of developing housing makes it impossible to create units that are affordable to most Mainers. With a consistent and reliable funding stream to offset these costs, we will be in a strong position to meet our housing production goals in a way that will provide a range of affordable options for individuals and families.

Housing development is a long game with high up-front risks. Fair Tide, for example, has been presented with a number of opportunities to acquire parcels that would be suitable for multi-family housing. Unfortunately, we turn down many of these prospects due to the competitive nature, timeline restrictions, and uncertainty of existing housing development funds. An ongoing source of funding for affordable housing development would allow developers like Fair Tide to move through the process with more certainty and, ultimately, bring more affordable units online.

We would welcome the opportunity to engage in further conversations as you explore this bill and consider the specifics of how the new funds would be obligated and distributed. Thank you for considering your support of LD 1082.

With appreciation,

Emily Flinkstrom, MSW  
Executive Director

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