



April 9th, 2025

Testimony in support of LD690: An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Provide Funding for Affordable and Low-income Housing Programs

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs.

My name is Eli Durand-McDonnell, I am from Bar Harbor, Maine and I am the Policy Coordinator at Maine Youth Power, a youth-led, youth movement throughout rural and suburban Maine fighting to win human dignity, equity and a livable future for all. I am here today on behalf of my organization to ask that you support LD690: An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Provide Funding for Affordable and Low-income Housing Programs

Maine, like many states across the country, is facing a brutal housing crisis. Many renters, especially young people or those without economic privilege are met with a lack of housing options, much less options that are actually affordable. As an organization, affordable housing is a chief concern of ours. In a months-long issue survey where we heard from over 100 young people about what political issues mattered the most to them, affordable housing was ranked as the second most important issue overall, and many respondents went out of their way to mention this topic in the additional comments section.

In the midst of this crisis, the passage of LD690 would provide crucial support for renters, hopeful first time homeowners, and economically disadvantaged Mainers simply looking for a place to call home. For the first time in a long time, Maine is actually growing. People from across the country are moving here, and young people want to stay in their home state as economic and social opportunities grow. However, this growth simply will not be sustainable without renewed investment in housing options that are actually safe and affordable.

In particular, our organization advocates for rural young Mainers and their needs, as there are unique challenges and opportunities that arise from living rurally as a young person. Without the passage of this bill, the Rural Affordable Rental Housing Program will end this spring, leaving many young people in less resourced areas of the state without viable housing options. If we are serious about investing in Maine's future generations and their success, programs like the Rural Affordable Rental Housing Program need funding.

Once again, on behalf of Maine Youth Power, I urge you to support LD690.

Thank you for your consideration,
Eli Durand-McDonnell