

**Mayor and Council Offices**

Mark Dion

Mayor

April 9, 2025



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Testimony of Mayor of the City of Portland, Mark Dion

*Before*

Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee

*In Support of*

**LD 690, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund the Construction of Affordable Housing**

April 9, 2025

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and Honorable Members of the Committee, I write on behalf of the City of Portland in strong support of LD 690, which proposes a general fund bond issue to expand the construction of affordable housing across the state. This bill represents an urgently needed investment in the housing solutions our communities require, and it provides a path forward to meeting the needs of both rural and urban Mainers.

Portland, as Maine's largest city and a regional economic center, continues to experience acute housing pressures across the income spectrum. The demand for deeply affordable and workforce housing remains high, particularly among essential workers in healthcare, education, public safety, and the service economy. While Portland has taken steps to revise zoning, promote density, and invest in transit-oriented development, our ability to meet housing demand is constrained by the limited resources available to municipalities.

We are encouraged that LD 690 supports the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program and rural affordable rental housing development. We also believe there is a strong opportunity to ensure that a portion of these funds are directed toward mixed-income infill development in infrastructure-ready urban areas. Infill development is a highly efficient and sustainable strategy. It makes use of existing roads, water, sewer, and transit infrastructure, strengthens neighborhood economies, and helps prevent outward sprawl. Yet, it is also among the most difficult forms of development to finance due to smaller scale, complex site constraints, and the need for thoughtful community engagement and design integration, which requires significant and often resource-intensive involvement from municipal planning staff.

Portland has committed to exploring new public tools for delivering housing, including through the formation of our Social Housing Task Force. We are working to identify approaches that balance long-term affordability, mixed-income design, and neighborhood compatibility. With targeted state investment through LD 690, municipalities like Portland would be well positioned to initiate new housing partnerships and deliver results that meet both local and statewide goals.

We support LD 690 as a critical step toward addressing Maine's housing crisis. We respectfully encourage the Committee to consider how this bond can also support urban infill and mixed-income development where it is most needed and where municipalities are ready to build. A strong Portland contributes directly to a strong Maine, and this legislation will give us the tools to move forward.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued leadership on housing and community investment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Dion", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Dion  
Mayor  
City of Portland, Maine