

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and distinguished members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee

My name is Anne Gass and I am writing in support of LD 690, as amended.

I am a volunteer with the Maine Shared Equity Housing Network, a group of individuals and nonprofits seeking to create permanently affordable housing in communities across Maine using a variety of models.

In particular, I'm writing to urge you to designate a portion of the affordable homeownership monies, at least \$15M, to Community Land Trusts (CLT), Limited Equity Cooperatives (LEC), and other models that are designed to keep housing permanently affordable.

Maine is experiencing an affordable housing crisis partly driven by inadequate supply, which has helped to drive prices up. At the state and federal level we have spent hundreds of millions of dollars over the last 30 years to create affordable rental and home purchase opportunities, and still we see homeownership out of reach for many Mainers. What if we had used those public subsidies to create permanently affordable housing? We would now have a large supply of housing that allows working families to pay a reasonable portion of their incomes for shelter while leaving enough left over to meet their other basic needs.

CLTs, LECs, and manufactured housing resident-owned communities are all examples of private housing that is made permanently affordable with the help of public funding. They are not public housing. States across the country use these models extensively and with great success. It is far more cost-effective to subsidize a unit once than it is to do it repeatedly. We simply cannot afford to subsidize housing repeatedly into the future as costs continue to soar.

It is past time for Maine to overcome its historical resistance to these models and provide the support to these models that they require. The private market cannot save us. Not everyone will need to—or want to—live in shared equity housing, and if they can afford other options then they should pursue those. But for lower-income Mainers, living in shared equity housing will provide permanency that they cannot have in the rental market, and limited cost increases because the units are removed from private market increases.

Please use funding from LD 690 to support shared equity housing in Maine. What do you have to lose?

Thank you for your work and for your consideration. I am happy to support this effort if needed.