



**Testimony of Maine Public Health Association in Support of
LD 1167: Resolve, to Create a Pilot Program to Assist Nonprofit Housing Developers in Rehabilitating
Existing Aging Housing Stock for First-time Home Buyers**

Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development
Room 208, Cross Building
Tuesday, April 15, 2025

Good afternoon, Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development. My name is Rebecca Boulos. I am a resident of South Portland and executive director of Maine Public Health Association.

MPHA is the state's oldest, largest, and most diverse association for public health professionals. We represent more than 850 individual members and 70 organizations across the state. The mission of MPHA is to advance the health of all people and places in Maine. As a statewide nonprofit association, we advocate, act, and advise on critical public health challenges. We are not tied to a national agenda, which means we are responsive to the needs of Maine's communities, and we take that responsibility seriously.

MPHA supports LD 1167: "Resolve, to Create a Pilot Program to Assist Nonprofit Housing Developers in Rehabilitating Existing Aging Housing Stock for First-time Home Buyers." This bill would establish and fund a pilot program to provide grants to nonprofit housing developers to rehabilitate Maine's existing (and aging) housing stock for purchase by first-time home buyers who will occupy the unit (i.e., not a second home or income-generating property) and whose income does not exceed 120% of the area's median income. If the home buyer sells the unit within the first 3 years of ownership, then they would agree to relinquish a graduated percentage of profit.

MPHA serves as co-lead of the Maine Climate Council's Community Resilience Working Group. It was clear in our working group discussions that people in Maine need help making their homes more resilient to increasingly frequent extreme weather events. Homes with poor flashing around windows and doors or old roofs in need of replacement are easy targets for water damage and mold growth. Existing, older homes may need more investment because of poor original construction, delayed maintenance, extreme weather events, or a combination of factors. This pilot program would improve Maine's existing and aging housing stock, without dramatically driving up the cost, so that homes don't fall further into disrepair and contribute to the housing crisis our state is facing. This pilot program would also avoid pricing out potential buyers, causing under-skilled homeowners to try to make repairs themselves, or forcing homeowners to live in unsafe and unhealthy dwellings that they can't afford to fix.

The pilot program outlined in LD 1167 is a promising and worthwhile investment for Maine. We strongly support this legislation and respectfully request you to vote LD 1167 "Ought to Pass." Thank you for your consideration.