



CITY OF
**SOUTH
PORTLAND**
Executive Department

Scott T. Morelli
City Manager

Joshua J. Reny
Assistant City Manager

April 24, 2025

Housing and Economic Development Committee
Cross Building, Room 206
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Support of LD 1287

Dear Sen. Curry, Rep. Gere, and Housing and Economic Development Committee Members:

My name is Scott Morelli, and as City Manager for South Portland, I am testifying today in SUPPORT of LD 1287: **An Act to Support Workforce Development by Establishing the Housing Stability Fund.**

In these uncertain economic times, housing affordability is one thing that remains a certainty. Attracting and retaining workers in both the public and private sectors also remains a definite challenge. LD 1287 offers a solution to both of these issues.

This legislation provides the Maine State Housing Authority (MSHA) with \$1.9 million annually to distribute to area agencies who will in turn use those funds to help best meet the housing needs of vulnerable residents in their communities. These funds would target households earning less than 30% of the area median income by providing up to \$3,000 in rental assistance, thus helping to prevent homelessness and housing instability. This could include assistance with security deposits, which can be a barrier to obtaining housing, or supplemental rental assistance, which helps keep families in homes.

Data suggests that those with secure housing are more apt to maintain employment and workforce participation than those who are unhoused. By helping people secure or maintain their housing, we help secure and maintain their presence in the workforce, so that they can eventually move up and no longer need assistance. Allowing these vulnerable residents to be evicted, on the other hand, causes a whole host of problems. They now need shelter, which are expensive to operate, and being unhoused can result in dropping out of the workforce, thus making these individuals in need of more financial assistance from the State and local government.

This is also a program that is proven to work. Between 2023 and 2024, a total of 240 low-income households in Southern Maine received help with security deposits, and 109 families accessed short-term rental assistance to serve as a steppingstone to employment and self-sufficiency—using an average of just 4 months of support. So rather than remaining unhoused or being evicted, these 240 households received a few months of support, avoided being unhoused, and were successful members of Maine's workforce, providing needed labor to Maine businesses.

I urge you to vote in favor of LD 1287 and support the well-being of Maine residents. Please help provide stable housing and workforce development for all Mainers.

Scott Morelli
South Portland
LD 1287

Attached please find testimony in support of LD 1287. I am unable to attend in person or via Zoom.