



Testimony in Favor of LD 1500
Maine Association of Public Housing Directors
LD 1500- An Act to Establish the Maine Community Development Financial
Institution Fund to Support Small Businesses, Rural Economic
Development and Affordable Housing

April 28, 2025

Chair Curry, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development, the Maine Association of Public Housing Directors submits testimony in strong support of LD 1500, "An Act to Establish the Maine Community Development Financial Institution Fund to Support Small Businesses, Rural Economic Development and Affordable Housing."

Maine Association of Public Housing Directors is a 501c3 comprised of the 21 Housing Authorities in Maine. We serve thousands of Maine residents from our smallest towns to our largest cities, reaching from Kittery to Van Buren. We are property owners, managers and housing developers.

LD 1500 will establish a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Fund, modeled on the federal fund, at the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD). This legislation will allow the state to direct future appropriations to CDFIs for grants and low- or no-cost investments to match federal awards and leverage new invested capital. LD 1500 will also bring CDFIs inline with similar programs by authorizing the State Treasurer to invest funds from the state's idle cash into CDFI's.

CDFIs are a proven tool to strengthen underserved communities by expanding affordable housing, investing in small businesses, and increasing access to capital. LD 1500 is a commonsense investment that has earned enthusiastic support from the State Treasurer, the DECD, and a host of bipartisan sponsors.

As representatives of Maine's public housing authorities, we witness the housing crisis and other struggles facing local economies firsthand. We've also seen how well-resourced CDFIs can empower communities and bring long-lasting solutions to the table.

The CDFI Fund established by LD 1500 will strengthen the partnership between the state and CDFIs, for the betterment of our communities.

We urge the committee to vote **Ought to Pass** on LD 1500 to help expand affordable housing and strengthen rural and underserved communities across Maine.