

Head of Falls Village: Written Testimony for LD 1500

Submitted by Todd M. Alexander, President, Renewal Housing Associates LLC

May 1, 2025

I am writing to urge you to support LD 1500, “An Act to Establish the Maine Community Development Financial Institution Fund to Support Small Businesses, Rural Economic Development and Affordable Housing.”

Our project, Head of Falls Village in Waterville, has received a loan from one of Maine’s CDFIs, The Genesis Fund. The Head of Falls Village development will have significant impact in bringing affordable housing to the Waterville region, and the Genesis Fund commitment to the project reflects that impact.

At full build out, Head of Falls Village will provide 63 units of much-needed housing, including 18 “workforce” units for middle income households, and 17,000 SF of commercial space that will house the future home of the Central Maine Growth Council (“CMGC”) and its business accelerator, Dirigo Labs. Over the long term, the total investment in this downtown redevelopment project is projected to be more than \$40MM.

The Genesis Fund provided \$1.5MM in acquisition and predevelopment financing for the site, which helped the project leverage many other resources, including: \$120,000 in Brownfield Assessment funds, \$500,000 in Brownfield Remediation funds, and \$499,900 in Community Development Block Grant funds and \$350,000 in private sector capital from the project sponsors, two Maine-based development companies.

The Genesis loan was critical to implementing the first phase in the redevelopment process at Head of Falls Village. The project required a mission-driven, below-market funding source to assist in the acquisition of the property, to allow public funding to flow to the project for building abatement, demolition and site remediation work. Genesis’ patient loan filled this gap and has provided an important bridge to the proposed development phases. This type of funding source is not readily available in the capital markets at the flexible terms that Genesis can offer as a CDFI.

I am grateful that there is a strong network of CDFIs in Maine who can support projects like ours. Anything the Maine Legislature can do to direct more resources to these institutions and ensure their growth and stability will support other Maine affordable housing and community development projects like Head of Falls Village.