

**LD 1087 An Act to Increase the State's Share of Major
Capital School Construction Costs**

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Senator Rafferty, Representative Murphy, and members of the committee I am Penny Jordan, Chair of the Cape Elizabeth Town Council. I am submitting testimony in support of LD 1087 *“An Act to Increase the State’s Share of Major Capital School Construction Costs”*.

I want to say this a bill is long overdue as towns across Maine continue to grapple with aging schools. Action by the state to spread the dollars available for school projects across a multitude of towns is critical as communities face the ever-growing challenges of how to fund renovation or replacement to their aging infrastructure.

I am sure you hear from many communities about the financial challenges experienced to upgrade or replace their aging schools. Many of these schools were built to accommodate the baby boomers, some are even older.

In November 2022 a \$115 million bond for new schools was voted down in Cape Elizabeth. In November 2024 a \$94.7 million project was voted down. In both instances it was the resulting tax impact that was voiced as the cause. This bill would allow funding for a portion of a project and could result in projects moving forward and help lessen the impact on property owners.

In June Cape Elizabeth will vote for the third time to fund the construction of a new middle school and renovations to our elementary school at a cost of \$89.5 million, resulting in a 12.3% tax increase. It would be ideal if there was a way to access funding to offset a portion of the cost and the resulting impact.

You often hear people say it’s the teachers not the buildings that create a strong school system. I do agree teachers are key to the programs, but the environment in which children learn is important as well. Facilities that align with the work environment young people will eventually work in – places for teams, collaboration and interaction. Our aging schools need to build toward this vision.

Thank you and ask that you pass this bill and move this very critical bill forward. And help towns across Maine create learning environments that work for the 21st century.