

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

May 6, 2025

Dear Senator Rafferty, Representative Noonan Murphy and distinguished members of the Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs,

My name is Cynthia Voltz and I am Vice-Chair of the Cape Elizabeth School Board. I'm writing to express strong support for LD 1087.

The Cape Elizabeth School Department has made two recent efforts to address the condition of our aging school facilities through local referenda. In 2022, we proposed a project to replace both the elementary and middle schools. That initiative failed. In 2024, we brought forward a more modest plan to replace the middle school and renovate the elementary school—again, the measure did not pass.

Now, in 2025, we are preparing for a third attempt. On June 10, Cape Elizabeth voters will consider a revised proposal to replace the middle school and address critical needs at the elementary school. Despite multiple project revisions and careful cost reductions, we continue to face a familiar barrier: the total cost of the project will fall solely on local taxpayers.

I recognize that Cape Elizabeth is not alone in this challenge. Across Maine, many school departments are struggling to replace or repair outdated buildings while balancing the fiscal realities their communities face.

The current school construction funding model in Maine operates as an all-or-nothing system—either a project qualifies for 100% state funding or it receives nothing. Because of this, and because available state funds are limited, only a very small number of school construction projects are approved in any given funding cycle. This leaves the vast majority of school districts, like Cape Elizabeth, with no option but to pursue fully locally funded solutions, which often fail at the ballot box due to cost concerns.

LD 1087 offers a smarter approach. By allowing for partial state funding—at least 25%—more communities could move forward with essential school improvements, and the state's limited construction dollars could be distributed more equitably and effectively across Maine.

Thank you for your time and your continued commitment to public education.

Respectfully,

Cynthia Voltz
Vice Chair, Cape Elizabeth School Board