

Leanne Candura
North Yarmouth
LD 1312

Dear members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs,
My name is Leanne Candura, and I am a resident of North Yarmouth and a parent in MSAD 51.

I am here in support of LD 1312 because it represents a meaningful first step toward addressing Maine's growing crisis in school infrastructure funding. Redirecting a portion of the Budget Stabilization Fund's investment earnings toward the Major Capital School Construction Fund acknowledges what many communities like mine have been experiencing for years: the need is urgent, and current state funding is not keeping pace.

In my district, we have already asked local taxpayers to shoulder the full cost of a new school—because even with two entire grade levels in portables and buildings well beyond capacity, our project received no state funding. We are not alone. More than 50 districts have applied for state aid in the current cycle, and only a handful will receive support. Others are left with building that are falling apart and no realistic path to state assistance.

The Governor's Commission on School Construction has already documented what communities see every day: the scale of need across Maine is measured in the billions, while the current funding system can only maintain a "status quo" that leaves many districts behind. LD 1312 helps—but the revenue it generates will not come close to meeting the statewide backlog or ensuring that all districts, not just a lucky few in each cycle, have access to safe, adequate school buildings.

With additional housing growth expected under laws like LD 1829, the pressures on school capacity will only intensify. Districts like ours want to support responsible development, but we cannot do so without a more predictable and equitable state partnership.

I urge the Committee to advance LD 1312 as the beginning of broader reform, and to continue working on a comprehensive, sustainable funding model that recognizes both the magnitude of Maine's school construction needs and the inequities built into the current system.

Thank you for your time and for taking this issue seriously.