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THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

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Testimony in Support of LD 1658

“An Act to Preserve and Strengthen the Fund for a Healthy Maine”

Presented to the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services

January 7, 2026

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer and esteemed colleagues on the Health and Human Services Committee. My name is Senator Peggy Rotundo. I represent Senate District 21 for the people of Lewiston, and I serve on the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee.

I submit this testimony in strong support of LD 1658, An Act to Preserve and Strengthen the Fund for a Healthy Maine. I want to thank Representative Graham for sponsoring this important bill, which advances one of the recommendations made by the 2023 Blue Ribbon Commission on which we both served.

I also want to thank Senator Bennett, who is championing some of the other Blue Ribbon Commission recommendations, as well as the 12 other members of the Commission who lent their time and expertise to the task of evaluating funding models and structures that could create sustained investment in the health and prosperity of Maine people and communities. The bipartisan support for the work of this Blue Ribbon Commission is an indication of its importance and its common sense.

LD 1658 is a straightforward solution to the Commission’s central charge: resolve the structural deficit in the Fund for a Healthy Maine; advance the long-term goals established by the Legislature for funds received from legal settlements and excise taxes on products that affect health and wellbeing; and maximize alignment between the intent of public health funding sources and the initiatives those funds support.

The Fund for a Healthy Maine and its positive impact on our communities is something we can

all be proud of. The value of preventing illness and promoting good health is well-established. With that in mind, it's time we commit to a path forward that stabilizes the Fund for a Healthy Maine and puts resources where we need them so we can invest in prevention and public health initiatives that meet the needs of Maine people and communities.

LD 1658 offers that path forward. This bill will stabilize the Fund for a Healthy Maine and align the use of our tobacco excise tax revenue with its intended purpose. Let's come together and do what's right for our kids and communities in a fiscally responsible way. I hope you will join me in seeing the opportunity before us to support the health and well-being of all Maine people.

I urge you to vote in favor of LD 1658. Thank you for your time and consideration.