

Town of Washburn

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Taxation Committee of the Maine Legislature

January 21, 2026

In Support of LD 2116

Good afternoon, Senator Grohowski, Representative Sayre, and members of the Taxation Committee.

My name is Donna Turner, and I am the Town Manager for the Town of Washburn. I am also, soon to be the administrator for the Washburn Housing Development, currently known as Salmon Brook Meadows. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 2116, which would remove the sunset of Maine's Affordable Housing Tax Credit.

Preserving existing affordable housing is one of the most urgent challenges we face in the Town of Washburn. Currently, we have very few homes available for sale, and there are no vacancies in any of our affordable housing developments. Our rental apartments are also fully occupied, but they often come with higher rents that exceed the budgets of many residents.

This situation disproportionately affects our seniors and individuals with disabilities, who rely heavily on subsidies to remain in these affordable homes and developments. Without immediate action to preserve and expand our affordable housing options, we risk displacing these vulnerable populations and exacerbating the housing crisis in our community.

The Maine Affordable Housing Tax Credit is a critical tool that allows local housing agencies and mission-driven nonprofit organizations experienced with housing to step in when existing affordable housing properties are at risk. It helps make the acquisition and rehabilitation of affordable housing feasible, particularly in rural communities and in USDA-assisted properties where financing options are limited.

In the coming months, we will be transferring Salmon Brook Meadows to The Washburn Housing Development, with plans for a significant rehabilitation of these 20 units. Originally built in the late 1970s, the development is structurally sound but requires crucial updates, including new windows, doors, and enhanced handicap accessibility. Without funding from the Maine Affordable Housing Tax Credit, we would be unable to undertake this necessary rehabilitation due to our limited financial resources.

Our seniors and individuals with disabilities in the community deserve upgraded living conditions that enhance their efficiency, safety, and comfort. The Maine Affordable Housing Tax Credit is vital in helping our elderly residents remain in their homes longer. With Washburn and the surrounding communities of Wade and Perham experiencing a substantial elderly population, this tax credit is essential to ensure that they can continue to live in our community.

Eliminating the sunset provision, as proposed in LD2116, would provide the predictability needed for our community to plan responsibly for future projects, secure financing, and protect

our residents from displacement. We believe that maintaining this resource is crucial for the wellbeing of our vulnerable populations and the overall health of our community.

Preserving existing affordable housing is also a cost-effective strategy for the State. In many rural communities, attracting developers to build new housing is extremely challenging. Once existing affordable homes are lost, they are rarely replaced.

For these reasons, The Town of Washburn and the Washburn Housing Development strongly supports LD2116 and asks the Committee to remove the sunset on Maine's Affordable Housing Tax Credit. This proven tool is essential to preserving housing stability and supporting healthy communities across Maine.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donna Turner". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Donna Turner
Washburn Town Manager
Washburn Housing Development Administrator