



## Executive Director



Diane Small

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### **In Favor of LD 2212: An Act Making Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027**

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development:

My name is Diane Small, and I serve as Executive Director of the Sanford Housing Authority (SHA). I am writing to express strong support for the housing investments included in LD 2212 and to share how these investments will directly impact the residents and community we serve in Sanford.

Sanford Housing Authority provides safe, affordable housing for low-income families, unhoused individuals and families, ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained Employed) affected individuals, older adults, and individuals with disabilities in the Sanford community. Every day, we see firsthand the growing gap between housing costs and household incomes. Demand for affordable housing in Sanford far exceeds supply. Our waiting lists remain long, turnover is limited, and many households in our community are cost-burdened or at risk of homelessness.

Housing is not a side issue — it is the foundation that determines whether Maine families can live, work, and thrive. According to the State of Maine Housing Production Needs Study, Maine needs 80,000 homes by 2030. To achieve that goal, we must produce approximately 8,500 to 9,300 homes per year, yet current production remains well below that target. This shortage is not abstract to us — it shows up in the form of families doubled up in unsafe conditions, seniors choosing between rent and medication, and working households commuting long distances because they cannot find housing they can afford locally.

The housing continuum in Sanford is under significant strain. Individuals remain in our local family emergency shelter or transitional settings longer than intended because there are no available affordable units. Seniors living in larger units have limited downsizing options. Working families who would otherwise move toward homeownership are unable to access attainable starter homes. When movement stalls at any point in the continuum, the entire system backs up — and public housing authorities feel that pressure immediately.

LD 2212 recognizes that housing is essential infrastructure. The proposed \$55 million for housing production — including investments in rural affordable rental housing, affordable homeownership opportunities, middle-income housing initiatives, mobile home park expansion, and leveraging of federal housing tax credits — will help expand supply across the continuum. Increased production relieves pressure on subsidized housing, reduces waiting lists over time, and creates pathways for residents to move toward greater stability and independence.

Equally important is the \$12 million for the Emergency Housing Relief Fund. Flexible funding allows communities and housing providers to respond quickly to urgent needs, prevent homelessness when possible, and stabilize households before crises escalate. For Sanford Housing Authority and our partners, this type of funding can mean the difference between a family maintaining housing or entering shelter.



As a public housing authority, SHA is committed to preserving existing affordable units, improving aging housing stock, and expanding opportunities where feasible. However, development and preservation are increasingly difficult due to rising construction costs, limited subsidies, and competitive funding environments. State investment is often the critical component that allows projects to move forward and leverage federal and private resources. Without it, needed housing simply does not get built.

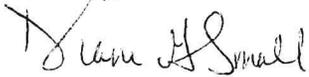
If we want a housing system in Sanford and across Maine that functions effectively — where shelter remains a short-term bridge, affordable rental housing is attainable, seniors can age in place with dignity, and working families have a pathway to stability — sustained investment across the continuum is essential.

LD 2212 will have a meaningful impact on Sanford Housing Authority and the residents we serve. It strengthens our ability to respond to housing instability, supports production and preservation efforts, and acknowledges that stable housing is foundational to economic and community well-being.

Please support the housing investments included in the supplemental budget proposal. The future stability of Sanford's families, workforce, and seniors depends on it.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



*Diane G. Small*

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