



February 18, 2026

Senator Rotundo
Representative Drew Gattine
Committee on Finance and Appropriation
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: Testimony in support of \$70M for new housing in the FY 2026-27 Supplemental Budget – LD 2212

Dear Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and esteemed members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee:

My name is Richard Hooks Wayman, and I am a resident of Portland, Maine. I have the honor of serving as the Chair of the Statewide Homeless Council and as President & CEO for VOA Northern New England which is headquartered in Brunswick. VOA Northern New England is a faith-based, community nonprofit that has offered affordable housing, residential treatment homes, supportive housing, and social supports to older adults, veterans, youth, and persons with disabilities for over 30 years.

Every week my agency receives phone calls from older adults facing the inability to maintain the cost of their homes or already facing homelessness. VOA owns and manages eleven affordable housing buildings in Maine with over 400 units. Each of our buildings have long waiting lists for older neighbors that we are not able to serve. Many of those on our waiting lists move out of state in doubled-up housing with family or kin but yearn to come back to their home communities. The displacement of our elders is directly related to Maine's inadequate production housing. Each year our state produces approximately 4,800 homes which only meets half of our state's total need. The housing crisis is acute and results in economic loss to businesses and communities, and homelessness is a drain on our state's health care system and resources.

I write in support of the Governor's proposal to include \$70 million for new housing production, preservation, homelessness response, aging-in-place, and local implementation support. As an affordable housing developer, housing owner, and homeless service provider, VOA is particularly interested in the \$15M to expand Maine's successful Rural Affordable Rental Program to create 83 new apartments in rural areas, the \$15 million to leverage federal housing tax credits, which will create 125 new rental apartments, and the \$12 million for the Emergency Housing Relief Fund, to provide short and long-term housing solutions for people experiencing homelessness. This investment is incredibly important to our future.

Thank you for considering my testimony. I am grateful for the immense amount of time and energy you expend each week in public service to Maine. We are lucky to have such dedicated leaders in our state Legislature.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Hooks Wayman

Richard A. Hooks Wayman, President & CEO

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