

Lucas Schrage
Project Home
LD 2212

Good afternoon, esteemed members of the Appropriations and Housing Committees:

My name is Lucas Schrage and I am the Director of Housing at Project Home. I have had the privilege of overseeing the administration of the Eviction Prevention Program Pilot from its launch in October 2024 until now.

I submit this testimony in support of continuing funding for the Eviction Prevention Program, LD1522, to sustain the significant progress made in keeping at-risk Mainers stably housed.

In close partnership with Maine Housing, we developed the infrastructure necessary to ensure that those experiencing imminent loss of their housing received assistance equitably and efficiently, gathering data along the way in hopes that those who might unfortunately go unserved during the pilot due to finite amounts of funding could be assisted down the line. We have leveraged extensive institutional knowledge, working relationships with community partners statewide, and a coordinated referral system to meticulously craft a process to help route EPP funding to benefit households facing the threat of eviction. Since launching, we have assisted nearly 1,300 households with rental arrears, supportive forward payments, and resource navigation. As a direct result, 7 out of 8 households that benefitted from this programming remain in their housing today and we have seen a 25% decrease in eviction filings.

The Eviction Prevention Program has proven itself to be an upstream, cost-effective approach to stabilize Maine's dynamic housing crisis while the state moves steadily toward filling the development gap. Eviction prevention and housing production must work in tandem. Without prevention, we risk destabilizing households faster than new units can come online. With it, we protect tenants, housing providers, communities, and the systems that bear the downstream costs of widespread housing loss.

On behalf of those still waitlisted for funding that they will not receive, or those facing eviction who still come to Project Home seeking rental assistance every day, I implore you to consider the tangible benefits of funding LD1522. This is not only the compassionate option, it is the fiscally responsible one. I also want to make myself available to answer any questions that the Committee might have on the administration of the Eviction Prevention Program Pilot.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the State and our shared housing goals.

Lucas Schrage
Director of Housing, Project Home