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February 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Re: Supplemental Budget Proposal Hearing; Housing Initiatives

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 Victoria Forkus, and I am submitting testimony on behalf of MeCAP in support of the affordable housing initiatives included in the supplemental budget. Together, these proposals address urgent needs across Maine's housing continuum and provide thoughtful, cost-effective solutions for some of our most vulnerable neighbors.

The budget includes continued support for home safety repairs and accessibility modifications that help low-income older adults and people with disabilities remain safe in their homes through the Community Aging in Place Program (CAIP). These preventive services reduce falls, prevent unnecessary hospitalizations, help stabilize the existing housing stock, and allow people to maintain independence and dignity.

The supplemental budget also expands resources to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness or facing sudden housing crises. These funds will provide flexible support to individuals in need and the agencies that serve them. MeCAP supports these investments because they address immediate safety needs and help communities move people toward long-term housing stability.

The budget also includes strategic investments to create new affordable homes through programs that expand development in rural communities, strengthen mobile home parks, and encourage cost-effective construction approaches. These initiatives help offset rising development costs, leverage private and federal funding, and promise to deliver more than 800 new units (*combined*) across the state. These initiatives seek to help all Mainers by slowly chipping away at the immense housing deficit in our state

MeCAP's members see firsthand the consequences of Maine's housing shortage, unsafe living conditions, seniors unable to stay in their homes, families on long waiting lists for affordable housing, and rising homelessness in communities of all sizes. The initiatives in this supplemental budget are practical investments that respond directly to the needs we see every day.

MeCAP strongly urges the Committee(s) to support the affordable housing initiatives in the supplemental budget. These investments will help stabilize vulnerable residents, strengthen communities, and move Maine toward a more equitable and sustainable housing system.

Thank you for your consideration.

*Victoria D. Forkus*

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