

Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs
C/O Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

February 19, 2026

RE: 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

Dear Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs,

My name is Ania Wright, and I am the Executive Director of Center for an Ecology Based Economy (CEBE) in Norway, Maine. At CEBE, our mission is to engage the community in addressing the climate emergency. We organize, educate, take direct action, and implement practical, ecological solutions for a just transition to a thriving, regenerative economy. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of the investments in housing in the proposed Supplemental Budget, LD 2212.

At CEBE, one of our main focus areas is shelter. One of the greatest struggles for many in our communities is to find affordable shelter. Much of the housing in our towns and rural communities is old and inefficient, and new construction is often geared toward larger single family homes. Strides have been made in energy efficiency, but the sheer size of many homes and the energy that is consumed in their construction will continue to exclude working families and individuals from the housing market.

This led us to the development of the Norway Equitable Housing Cooperative (NEHC), which has been growing since July 2021 with support from CEBE. A small group of local renters and members of CEBE have been meeting regularly around a shared need and vision for equitable, energy efficient, inspired housing in our town to address needs that current rental housing and federally and state-subsidized affordable housing do not.

Recent developments in green building technology utilizing local timber, clay, stone, and agricultural waste products like straw have shown that beautiful, highly livable and ultra-efficient housing can be affordable and have a much lower impact on the environment both in their construction and operation. These techniques are not only affordable but are accessible to the ambitious owner-builder with some training and experience. Ongoing training in green building skills can both help to create a new generation of low-impact shelter, and a new generation of builders and teachers. Intentional communities and co-housing projects have also demonstrated efficiencies in creating affordable shelter by sharing costs of essential

systems, with added benefits of localized food and energy production and other benefits of close community.

The Governor's supplemental budget proposes a \$70 million investment in housing, including production, preservation, homelessness response, aging-in-place, and local implementation support. CEBE strongly supports these investments, and in particular, the \$15 million for the successful Rural Affordable Rental Program (RARP) to create 83 new apartments in rural areas across the state. It is programs like the RARP that will allow projects like NEHC to come to fruition and provide much needed equitable, energy efficient, affordable housing to relieve our communities from the housing crisis.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for your dedication to the people of Maine.

Sincerely,

Ania Wright
Executive Director
Center for an Ecology Based Economy