

**Testimony of the Maine Association of Public Housing Authority Directors**

***131<sup>st</sup> Legislature***

***Joint Select Committee on Housing***

***RE: LD226, An Act to Address Maine's Affordable Housing Crisis.***

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing. My name is Chace Jackson, partner at the Resurgam Group, I am here to testify on behalf of The Maine Association of Public Housing Authority Directors in favor of **LD226, An Act to Address Maine's Affordable Housing Crisis.**

The Maine Association of Public Housing Authority Directors membership consists of twenty local Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) across the state of Maine, with Public Housing Executive Directors from Sanford to Fort Fairfield. These folks are critical to the pathway for building more affordable housing in Maine. Our members would have liked to testify individually at this hearing, but this hearing overlaps with a statewide Housing Directors meeting.

It is no secret, Maine is facing a housing crisis that is leaving thousands of low-income individuals and families without a place to call home. With some reports indicating that there are over 20,000 low-income households in Maine that are in dire need of affordable housing. This shortage has fueled record levels of homelessness, increasing rates of evictions, and a long waitlist for housing vouchers and affordable housing units.

The dire consequences of the lack of affordable housing extend beyond the economy, impacting the health and well-being of Maine's residents. Numerous people face difficulties in securing safe and affordable housing, resulting in heightened stress, deteriorating health outcomes, and financial instability. It is of paramount importance that we persist in our efforts to guarantee that every individual in Maine has access to affordable housing. A just society must ensure that all its citizens have the opportunity to lead a dignified life, which includes access to safe and affordable housing. Failing to address this issue exacerbates social inequality and undermines the foundations of a fair and compassionate community.

The introduction of LD226 couldn't be more important. As proposed, this bill would provide \$200 million split evenly between the 2023-2024 fiscal year and the 2024-2025 fiscal year to build much-needed affordable homes for Maine's most vulnerable residents.

One of the main obstacles to building affordable housing in Maine has been a lack of funding. However, LD226 will help to address this issue, and it couldn't come at a better time. To meet the current demand for affordable housing, Maine needs to be building at least 1,000 new units each year. Unfortunately, Maine hasn't achieved this since the 1970s, and the lack of funding to build affordable housing is the main barrier to addressing the housing crisis.

LD226 is a critical step forward in solving Maine's housing crisis. LD226 is a promising step in the right direction. It is a moral imperative that we continue to invest in affordable housing