

## **Testimony in Support of LD 226**

## An Act to Address Maine's Affordable Housing Crisis

## **Committee on Housing**

Friday, April 14, 2023

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and members of the Committee on Housing, my name is Cameron Clark and I am a resident of Houlton where I own and manage residential rental properties and here in support of LD 226.

Throughout high school and summers in college, I worked hard mowing lawns, and one of them had a for sale sign on it for an entire summer. I joked with my colleague that I was tired of mowing around that sign and I was going to buy the building. That day was my start in housing.

Years later I have 40 market-rate units in Houlton across 12 buildings and a waiting list of over 100 people who have filled out an application for housing. Aroostook County is not immune to this housing crisis and the need for more units but many property owners and small developers in my area have thrown their hands up due to the environment of high-interest rates and costly building materials.

However, I have not. Two weeks ago I received unanimous support from the Houlton Planning Board for a 7-unit multi-family building in preparation to submit an application for MaineHousing's Rural Affordable Rental Housing Program. I have a construction budget from a local general contractor who is ready to build and my site is prepared for the project. While Houlton lacks a sufficient number of affordable rental units we also are in need of affordable homes. Many of my younger working tenants tell me they won't be renting forever and dream of buying their first home.



This is why I am currently working to develop a small subdivision on land I already own and plan to submit an application to utilize MaineHousing's Affordable Homeownership Program.

While the projects I am working on will be deemed affordable for income-eligible tenants, building up any supply of units to meet demand will have an impact on keeping market-rate rents competitive. The opportunity to apply for assistance through these programs is just the beginning of my endeavors in developing affordable housing and making a fulfilling impact in my community. I ask for your support of LD 226 and other legislative bills that provide more funding for affordable housing.

Best Regards,

Cameron Clark

President

K & E Holdings Group, Inc.