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Testimony of Rep. Kristen Cloutier Introducing
LD 470, An Act to Support Lead Abatement in Older Residential Properties
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Housing

Good morning, Senator Pierce, Representative Gere and distinguished members of the Legislature's Housing Committee. My name is Kristen Cloutier, and I represent House District 94, which includes a portion of Lewiston. I am here before you to introduce **LD 470, An Act to Support Lead Abatement in Older Residential Properties**.

Very simply, this bill provides for an ongoing General Fund appropriation of \$1,000,000 for the Maine State Housing Authority's lead abatement program.

Throughout my legislative career, I have both sponsored and cosponsored legislation to mitigate lead in our communities due to its extensive presence and detrimental impacts on our children.

Maine has the 7th oldest housing stock in the nation with 36% of homes built before 1950. Almost all (90%) of childhood lead poisoning cases in Maine occur in homes built before 1950.

As I am sure you are aware, lead negatively affects virtually every system in the human body and is particularly harmful to the developing brains and nervous systems of young children. Further, those under six are at a greater risk for lead poisoning because they more frequently ingest lead dust and paint chips as they explore the environment around them.

The Maine CDC has designated four communities, made up of seven towns, as being high-risk areas for lead poisoning, with my hometown of Lewiston being the second among them. Lewiston has been working hard to address lead paint hazards in rental properties, and over the course of 2007 to 2021, the estimated percent of children under three years of age with a blood lead level at or above 5 micrograms per deciliter now matches the average state level of 1.7% (in 2007, this number was 10.7%).

While much work has been done to reduce exposure to lead, there is still much to do. This additional, ongoing funding will help ensure our families' safety from lead.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation. I am happy to answer any questions.