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Maine Community Action Partnership Supports LD 470 An Act to Support Lead Abatement in Older Residential Properties

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Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, members of the Special Committee on Housing, I am Megan Hannan, Executive Director of the Maine Community Action Partnership and we support LD 470 An Act to Support Lead Abatement in Older Residential Properties.

As you know, Maine has some of the oldest housing stock in the nation. This poses many separate and interwoven challenges to assuring our communities have access to affordable, appropriate housing. The original sticks and bricks are crumbling; the paint is peeling; and where the paint is lead based, it is poisoning the people who live there, especially the children.

The Maine CDC designates seven towns, reduced to four communities, as high-risk lead poisoning areas. They keep close track of testing children under three years of age, print the results and compare the incidence of lead poisoning to other, lower risk areas of the state. The top risk factors are, of course, older housing and poverty.

Not surprisingly, of those high-risk communities, Auburn and Lewiston lead the percent of children who are tested whose blood tests show greater or equal to five milligrams per deciliter of blood – which is the threshold for what we would call “lead poisoning” – at 4.9 and 4%, respectively. However, within the top ten communities, Rockland, with a positive rate of 5.8%, leads that measure but has a much lower number of children screened.¹

For those children who are diagnosed with lead levels higher than deemed safe, the CDC offers a host of supports for those children and their families.

This bill will support lead poisoning prevention. Our Community Action Agencies are doing lead abatement now, but we can never do as many buildings as we'd like to. Adding \$1 million per year, for the next few years, will help us to make more homes safe for children and families.

Thank you for your time and attention, I am happy to try to answer any questions you have.

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1. <https://gateway.maine.gov/cognos/cqi-bin/cognosisapi.dll>