

On Behalf of the Maine Real Estate Managers Association

In support of LD 1282 An Act to Streamline Income Verification Requests for Income Supplemental and Assistance programs

April 19, 2023

Senator Baldacci, Representative Meyer, members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is BJ McCollister, I am the President of the Resurgam Group and am testifying on behalf of the Maine Real Estate Managers Association (MREMA).

Our organization is a nonprofit which represents over 80 professional property management companies providing affordable and subsidized housing throughout the state. It is within our mission to promote the availability of safe, decent affordable housing in Maine. Our management members are both for-profit and nonprofit landlords that believe in this mission.

As property managers, an important step in housing those in need is to confirm they are income eligible for the funding program of the property they are applying to. At application, a household's income must be verified using a 3rd party verifier. Property Managers are reliant on the response of 3rd party verifiers to house those in need, in this case income verified through the Department of Health and Human Services. If a response in providing this verification is delayed beyond a reasonable window of time, 3-5 business days for example, it can delay or jeopardize the housing for this household.

In many cases an applicant is homeless, and a delay in response by DHHS means the household continues to be homeless. For those who have given a notice to their current landlord, this delay could force them into homelessness. For others, they could be rent burdened in their current housing and this delay continues that financial burden unnecessarily.

We believe this bill will allow those in need of affordable housing receive the housing they need quicker and more efficiently. For that reason, MREMA supports the passage of LD 1282.