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Maine Community Action Partnership Supports Housing Sections of L.D. 1074 An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund New Affordable Housing for Low-income Households

April 25, 2023

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, I am Megan Hannan, Executive Director of Maine Community Action Partnership, and we support LD 1074 An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund New Affordable Housing for Low-income Households.

Our state's greatest resource is our people, and our state's policies and budget shape people's possibilities. In Community Action, we create conditions that invite children to learn and adults to apply their skills, tapping into the hidden potential in our communities. Through our Whole Family approach, we build a family's capacity for sustained stability and economic growth. We invest in the family's well-being, we let them drive their own story, and we have tangible success.

With that success comes social and economic mobility, the opportunity to build a sense of safety for themselves and their family. But even with that, even with a little more money to spend on the roof over one's head, we have a crisis in Maine. Rents are going up in every town and city, and too many of the people we depend on – teachers, police, plumbers – are being squeezed out.

Compounding the problem in Maine is simply that we do not have enough housing built and move in ready for all who need it, let alone housing specifically for working people and families. The \$100 million bond proposed to increase the supply of housing is one of the most important things we can do this year, and I hope you will support it. We have public and private companies and community action agencies that want to build more workforce housing, but building new developments is costly and when you are also assuming lower rents, the math doesn't always look good.

The programs we have in place, the Rural Rental Program and Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program, both administered by MaineHousing, are critical to our success. Adding this funding to what already exists is necessary now, as we know we need to build more housing to meet the needs of our communities. We have asked for money in the budget and certainly hope that is still in the mix. This adds more, very necessary money to that table from a different source.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

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