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Testimony of Rep. Marc Malon presenting
LD 611, An Act to Create the Whole Home Repairs Program
Before the Joint Select Committee on Housing

Good morning, Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and honorable members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing. I am Marc Malon and I represent House District 133, which is part of the great city of Biddeford. I am here today to present my bill, **LD 611, An Act to Create the Whole Home Repairs Program**.

This bill was printed as a concept draft, though I must confess that was not my intent. Attached to my testimony, you will find a draft sponsor's amendment; this amendment is what I will be speaking to today.

The idea for this bill came from a good friend of mine, who sent me an article about a relatively new program in Pennsylvania called the Whole Home Repair Program. This program was developed in response to a nationwide problem – while we want to weatherize homes to make them more energy efficient for both the cost-savings and the reduction of carbon emissions, many homes are in disrepair to the extent that weatherization is not possible. This particularly impacts lower-income renters and homeowners who might otherwise qualify for weatherization assistance programs.

Maine Housing operates an excellent program currently called “Weatherization Readiness.” It is funded through the HOME Fund and provides grants of up to \$15,000 to homeowners and forgivable loans of up to \$25,000 to certain landlords in order to facilitate necessary repairs – repairs which prepare a building for weatherization and frankly are important to make regardless.

LD 611 builds on what Maine Housing is doing by codifying the program in statute and providing an ongoing appropriation from the General Fund to bolster the program. Importantly, this bill does not touch what Maine Housing is doing out of the HOME Fund. Rather, it adds resources and thus a greater ability to help more Mainers.

The bill also specifies some of the uses these funds would be for. These uses include several improvements that better prepare a home for weatherization and significantly improve indoor air

quality. I am grateful to the Maine Indoor Air Quality Council, which made several recommendations on this topic.

I am open-minded about how best to structure this enhanced program, but I also strongly believe this type of work is necessary. Maine's housing stock is very old and - as we know - very drafty. Investing in these home improvements would benefit everyone. Therefore, I encourage the committee to vote "Ought to Pass **As Amended.**"

CONCEPT DRAFT AMENDMENT TO LD 611
AN ACT TO CREATE THE WHOLE HOME REPAIRS PROGRAM
Presented by the sponsor – Representative Marc Malon

Sec. 1. 30-A MRSA §§4995, is enacted to read:

Subchapter 14: WHOLE HOME REPAIRS PROGRAM

§4995 Whole home repairs program

1. Program. The Maine State Housing Authority shall establish and administer a program that provides assistance, including grants, for weatherization readiness in residential housing, referred to in this subchapter as “the program.” Program funds must be used to supplement and not supplant funds provided under the Housing Opportunity for Maine program established by subchapter 7 or federal funds available for weatherization readiness assistance administered by the Maine State Housing Authority.

2. Purpose. The purpose of the program is to provide weatherization assistance to housing units consisting of households with incomes up to 100% of the area median income as established by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, whether the housing is owned by an individual or a for-profit or non-profit entity. Weatherization projects eligible for funding assistance by the program include, but are not limited to the following:

- a. Repair or replacement of a roof with a substantial leak or leaks;
- b. Repair or replacement of windows which are either not air-tight or water-tight;
- c. Repair of foundations which allow water to leak into the residence;
- d. Closure of open sump pumps;
- e. Installation of kitchen or bathroom exhaust fans vented to the outdoors; and
- f. Radon testing and mitigation.

3. Whole Home Repairs Fund. The Whole Home Repairs Fund, referred to in this subchapter as the “the fund” is established under the jurisdiction and control of the Maine State Housing Authority. The fund is nonlapsing and must be used to fund the program. The fund consists of funds appropriated by the Legislature for the purpose of this section, transfers from the Housing Opportunities for Maine Fund under section and other funds acquired by the Maine State Housing Authority to accomplish the purpose of this program.

SUMMARY

This amendment replaces LD 611 which is a concept draft. The amendment establishes a state-funded program for weatherization readiness assistance for residential housing units with household incomes up to 100% of the area median income. The program is to be administered by the Maine State Housing Authority. The program is intended to complement weatherization assistance paid for using federal funds.