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Maine Community Action Partnership Supports LD 611 An Act to Create the Whole Home Repairs Program

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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, the membership organization of the ten Community Action Agencies in Maine, and we support the Sponsor's Amendment to LD 611 An Act to Create the Whole Home Repairs Program.

Our state's greatest resource is our people, and our state's policies 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.

To that end, among other programs and services, we administer MaineHousing weatherization programs to help keep Maine residents "Warm and Dry," as we call the program. This bill addresses one of the frustrations we have had over time: when we come to a house that needs extensive repairs, we do not have the funding mechanism to do that, so we have to leave it behind rather than do the general weatherization work, for which we do have funds. It has been a perverse disincentive to the work.

My agencies' crews do this work through multiple channels, but none have had the ability to really fix the big problem first. To have access to this complimentary program, do fix the roof and windows before we weatherproof them, for example, makes so much sense. It will allow us to serve customers we have not been able to serve before, which is, as you know, especially important now, when we need to help keep people safe in their homes for as long as possible, due to the lack of housing for anyone to move to.

I have not seen the fiscal note, but I would ask that if you choose to pass this bill, you really fund it, as well. The need is there, and like MaineHousing has been saying about a predictable, sustained funding source for building homes, that predictability and sustained funding is equally true here.

Thank you very much for your time and attention, I am happy to answer your questions if I can.

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