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EDA designated economic development district

Co-Chairs Teresa Pierce and Traci Gere

Joint Committee on Housing

c/o Legislative Information Office

100 State House Station

Augusta, maine 04333

Dear Senator Pierce and Representative Gere:

This letter is in support of **House Bill 602: An Act to Provide Regional Support to Deliver State and Federal Programs to Cities and Towns in the State**. In this period of housing need, development pressure, and transitioning communities in the midcoast, this bill provides important base funding for the Midcoast Council of Governments (MCOG) to assist our regional community in addressing housing land use issues. MCOG is currently conducting three different subregional housing assessments, has provided at least a dozen communities with direct LD2003 assistance, and heard and talked to many more. We have identified a housing gap in our region alone of 4,700 units. With additional resources and an ongoing implementation strategy there is so much more that we can do.

In addressing these challenges, MCOG's technical assistance and guidance on housing issues, land use and funding opportunities have been critical to our 62+ small and medium size communities. We would like to do more, particularly as we see our coastal communities faced with so many competing investors and interests that remove year-round homes from the market.

This all in the face of continued employee shortages. For example, BIW continues to identify the need for over 1,000 employees, with many turning down the opportunity to work here in Maine because of the cost of housing. The Maine Health System in the midcoast struggles with identifying a supply of housing for all levels of worker, from orderlies to Doctors.

Communities need our help and assistance that range from simple ordinance amendments to identifying financing and developers to meet an ever-growing housing shortage. Please consider this bill and the funding to support it.

Sincerely:

Mathew Eddy

Executive Director