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Testimony of Rep. Kristen Cloutier in support of
**LD 2146, An Act to Prohibit Certain Municipalities from Adopting Moratoria on
Emergency Shelters**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government

Good afternoon, Senator Nangle, Representative Stover and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government. My name is Kristen Cloutier, and I represent House District 94, part of my hometown of Lewiston. I am pleased to cosponsor **LD 2146, An Act to Prohibit Certain Municipalities from Adopting Moratoria on Emergency Shelters**.

LD 2146 prohibits municipalities with populations exceeding 30,000 people from adopting moratoria on the establishment of emergency shelters that provide temporary shelter for our unhoused neighbors. This would impact places like Portland, Bangor and Lewiston.

In April 2022, the City of Lewiston passed a six-month moratorium on shelters, which stated that “no person or organization shall develop, construct or operate a new, no or low barrier shelter within the City for which a development review approval for a conditional use has not been determined to be complete by vote of the Planning Board prior to March 28, 2022 without complying with whatever ordinance amendment or amendments the City may enact as a result of this moratorium.” As a result, plans for a new 24-hour low barrier homeless shelter were immediately halted and no new shelters have been established since the moratorium was lifted.

Meanwhile, our housing crisis grows more dire by the day. Lewiston is the second largest municipality in Maine yet we do not operate a public shelter. During a time when housing is scarce, and unhoused Mainers continue to struggle, we must pursue solutions that would help ensure that our community members have a warm, safe place to lay their head at night. Passing moratoria, such as the one enacted in Lewiston not only does the opposite, but it puts pressure on surrounding cities and towns to house those who can’t find shelter in Lewiston and fails miserably at addressing the root causes of homelessness. We **MUST** do better.

Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

District 94: Part of Lewiston