

State of Maine
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Testimony of Dr. Laura Cyr, Federal and State Legislative Specialist, Department of Education

In Support of: L.D. 2179

Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 64: Maine School Facilities Program and School Revolving Renovation Fund, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Education and the Maine Municipal Bond Bank (EMERGENCY)

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs

Sponsored by: Representative Brennan

Date: February 13, 2024

Senator Rafferty, Representative Brennan, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs:

My name is Dr. Laura Cyr, and I am here today representing the Department speaking in support of L.D. 2179, Resolve, Regarding Legislative Review of Portions of Chapter 64: Maine School Facilities Program and School Revolving Renovation Fund, a Major Substantive Rule of the Department of Education and the Maine Municipal Bond Bank (EMERGENCY). This Resolve provides for legislative review of portions of Chapter 64: Maine School Facilities Program and School Revolving Renovation Fund, a major substantive rule of the Department of Education and the Maine Municipal Bond Bank.

As a result of the First Special Session of the 131st Maine Legislature, Resolve 2023, Chapter 44, "Resolve, Directing the Department of Education and the Maine Municipal Bond Bank to Amend Their Rules Regarding the Maine School Facilities Finance Program and the School Revolving Renovation Fund" effective October 25, 2023 directs the Maine Department of Education and the Maine Municipal Bond Bank to amend their rules to require: (1) that the maximum total loans from the fund for repair, renovation, and improvement projects for Priority One, Priority Two, Priority Three, Priority Four and Priority Five be increased from \$4,000,000 to \$8,000,000, and (2) that the maximum loan amount from the fund to address each priority level in a school building be increased from \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000 within any 5-year period. It's a small change in the text of the rule and can be found in Section H on the second to last page. This change was made in collaboration with the Maine Municipal Bond Bank.

The proposal you have before you was subject to public scrutiny as outlined in Title 5, §8052. A public comment period was open from October 25 through 5 p.m. on November 27, 2023 and included a virtual and in-person opportunity for the public to participate on November 17. Notice of the public comment period was filed with the Secretary of State's Office on October 17, 2023.

Now, as part of this review process for major substantive rules, the Maine Department of Education has submitted the revisions in compliance with Title 5, §8071.

I am happy to answer any questions the Committee may have, and I will be available for work sessions on this bill.