



MAINE AFFORDABLE
HOUSING COALITION

**131st Legislature
Joint Select Committee on Housing**

Testimony of Laura Mitchell, Executive Director of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition

February 20, 2024

In favor of 2209- An Act to Increase the Cap on Bonds Issued by the Maine State Housing Authority to Reflect Current Housing Production Needs in the State - sponsored by Representative Traci Gere

Good afternoon, Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and esteemed members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing, I'm sharing this testimony on behalf of Laura Mitchell, Executive Director of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition.

The Maine Affordable Housing Coalition (MAHC) is a nonprofit membership organization of more than 140 Maine housing development, architecture, construction, design, engineering, shelter, and housing services organizations. We work to address Maine's housing crisis by advocating for the creation and preservation of housing for all people in Maine.

MAHC is sharing this testimony in favor of LD 2209, a An Act to Increase the Cap on Bonds Issued by the Maine State Housing Authority to Reflect Current Housing Production Needs in the State that is sponsored by Representative Traci Gere. This bill increases the cap on mortgage purchase bonds authorized by Maine Housing to align with the high demand for housing production.

Maine is in a housing crisis and demand outstrips supply. The state is short more than 20,000 units of lower income housing and even more for middle income. **Building new affordable housing is vital. LD2209** addresses an administrative issue that could stall the recent progress we have made going from building about 250 affordable homes per year to approximately 750 a year.

Maine has made historic investments to grow the development pipeline. Concurrently, the cost to build and preserve housing has increased. Maine Housing finances these developments. This bond cap increase is necessary to maintain and grow the number of affordable homes being built. Otherwise, the development pipeline could stall.

There is no fiscal note for this change, and Maine Housing's history of strong credit is a testament to its capacity to make sound housing investments.

Now is the time to address this minor change to ensure Maine continues to produce and preserve affordable housing.

Thank you.