

City of Portland | City Council

Mark Dion, *Mayor*



To: Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

From: Mayor Mark Dion, Chair, Portland City Council's Legislative Committee

Date: 2/23/2024

Re: Part HH of LD 2214

Testimony in Support of Part HH of LD 2214

An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs:

On behalf of the Portland City Council's Legislative Committee, I write to you in support of Part HH of LD 2214, An Act to Make Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds and to Change Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025.

Part HH of LD 2214 would transfer \$16,000,000 from the unappropriated surplus of the General Fund to the Maine State Housing Authority, Emergency Housing Relief Fund Program, Other Special Revenue Funds account to supplement or establish programs addressing the needs of people experiencing homelessness or facing other immediate housing needs, and support other uses that address housing emergencies in the State, such as through privately-operated low barrier shelter, winter warming shelters, legal services, and other wraparound settlement supports intended to help individuals integrate into Maine's workforce and communities.

The shortage of housing and the escalating costs of homes and rents have led to severe consequences, including a rise in homelessness. This crisis encompasses families unable to afford rising rents, individuals grappling with mental health and substance use issues, and those seeking asylum in Maine, all in need of immediate shelter.

The funding in Part HH of LD 2214 directly targets one of the most pressing issues facing our communities. By providing resources to address these needs, the state demonstrates its commitment to supporting vulnerable populations and ensuring access to safe and stable housing.

Part HH of LD 2214 isn't just about providing temporary shelter; it also aims to help individuals integrate into the workforce and communities. This holistic approach recognizes that stable housing is foundational for economic stability and social integration. By supporting wraparound services that address employment and community integration, the state fosters long-term solutions to homelessness.

The City of Portland's Legislative Committee urges the Committee to support this measure that would provide essential support to individuals and families in crisis.

Thank you for your consideration.