

131st Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs and the Joint Select Committee on Housing
Testimony of Mary H. Mayo, Bowdoinham, February 22, 2024
in favor of the Supplemental Budget LD2214

Good afternoon, Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; and Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing. My name is **Mary Mayo**.

I've been involved in community conversations in Bowdoinham regarding housing issues for more than a year both as Board Chair of BCDI (Bowdoinham Community Development Initiative) and as a committee member of the Housing Action Committee (HAC), an ad hoc committee of the Comprehensive Planning Committee (CPC). BCDI partnered with the the CPC to host two community community conversations last winter to assess the current housing needs. More than 60 people attended the first gathering where needs were assessed and solutions discussed. Almost as many residents attended the second meeting where solutions were further discussed and next steps determined. The HAC was formed as a result to help craft language for the Comprehensive Plan that would steer additional housing to growth areas and to development applicable land use ordinances.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you in support of the Supplemental Budget lines Part GG that allocates \$10,000,000 to Maine Housing for Affordable Homeownership, and Part HH that allocates \$16,000,000 to Maine Housing for the Emergency Housing Relief Fund program.

We appreciate Maine's historic investments in housing over the last four years. But Maine is in a devastating housing crisis, and Maine is decades behind in investing in housing. Hard working Maine people can't find or afford a place to live, people are living outside in uninhabitable conditions, and seniors are struggling to just scrape by covering food, medicine and housing.

MAINE CAN'T WAIT. Now isn't the time to leave dollars on the table. Build affordable homes for Maine people. Housing is the best one-time investment, with the most long-term rewards for Maine people. Your legacy can be building homes that will last for generations of Maine people.

Please allocate an additional \$20 million in housing split between Maine Housing's Low Income Housing Tax Credit Program and the Rural Affordable Rental Housing program. This would come from the \$100 million unallocated portion of the Supplemental Budget.

With the approval of the Comprehensive Plan and several recommended land use ordinance changes, Bowdoinham will have the tools in place to create the housing needed in Bowdoinham. This new investment can quickly be put to use building affordable homes. There are affordable housing projects across Maine that are ready to begin construction, if this funding is made available.

Thank you for your time, attention and consideration of this opportunity for you to leave a legacy of providing homes for all people in Maine.

Mary H. Mayo