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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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**Testimony of Representative Traci Gere Introducing LD 2277,
Resolve, Authorizing the Commissioner of Administrative and
Financial Services to Convey by Sale the Interests of the State in 3
Properties Located in Biddeford, Sanford and York
March 26, 2024**

Good morning Senator Pierce and fellow members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing. I am Representative Traci Gere, and I represent House District 134. I am before you today to present LD 2277, which proposes a process by which ownership of three state-owned courthouse buildings in York County can be put to a new use as housing.

On the Housing committee, we have considered and passed good legislation that encourages and supports communities in repurposing buildings for productive use and in locating housing development where there are already centers of human activity and community resources. The principle of sensible reuse of existing buildings was well-stated by Kathryn Rogers Merlino, University of Washington associate professor of architecture, in her recent book, "Building Reuse."

"Each (building) should be considered in the context of what the community needs, modes of transportation, and whether it makes sense for that location. Seen in this light, existing buildings should be regarded not as targets for demolition, but as sites ripe for reinvention."

Or, in the immortal words of Jack Johnson on the Curious George movie soundtrack, "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle."

The proposal in front of us provides a common sense process for repurposing the vacant courthouse buildings in York, Sanford, and Biddeford for much needed housing by transferring the properties to the local public housing authorities. These buildings are well-situated for meeting our housing needs and represent a eminently logical reuse of state facilities.

I urge our committee to deliver a unanimous Ought to Pass on LD 2277.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Traci Gere".

Traci Gere
State Representative

District 134: Biddeford (part), Kennebunk (part) and Kennebunkport