

MAINE AFFORDABLE HOUSING COALITION

Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations & Financial Affairs & the Joint Standing Committee on Housing & Economic Development

Testimony of Laura Mitchell, Executive Director of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition, 2.5.24
in favor of LD210 the Budget Part PP (Maine Housing) and Part D (Maine Office of Community Affairs)

Good afternoon, Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; and Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development.

My name is Laura Mitchell. I am the Executive Director of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition. MAHC is a nonprofit with 140 member organizations working to create and preserve affordable homes for all Maine people.

MAHC, and the thousands of people that live in affordable housing in Maine, would like to thank the State for their unprecedented investments in housing recently. We applaud the inclusion in this budget of \$3 million to the fund to preserve manufactured home parks in Maine. This program has saved more than 1,000 affordable homes for Maine people and is vital to keeping people housed.

The recent investments the State made to build new affordable housing through Maine Housing has created the largest ever pipeline of 3,000 affordable homes under construction. But 3,000 homes is only a start in meeting the goal of 80,000+ homes our state needs. And these investments were only one time disbursements. Without additional funding, the construction of affordable homes will dramatically decrease.

There are two Maine Housing programs in particular that will end this spring without additional funding – the Rural Affordable Rental Housing Program, and the Affordable Home Ownership Program. These programs have built homes from Aroostook County to York County and everywhere in between. In this final round of applications, we can see that projects are shovel ready, but just need some state funding to get built. The Rural Program had \$51 million in requests from housing projects, but only has \$25 million to distribute. The Home Ownership Program has projects that need \$13 million to get built, but only \$10 million to spend. These programs will end and shovel ready homes won't get built. That's a economic blow to towns throughout Maine. Housing is the SOLUTION for Maine's economy and health, and we need to find long-term, sustainable sources of funding to invest in the housing solution.

Finally, MAHC supports Part D of the budget that creates the Maine Office of Community Affairs. This is a vital step in achieving shared housing goals across levels of government. Local control plays a big role in building housing, and municipalities need support to plan for and streamline housing development. MAHC asks that you also consider moving the oversight of off-site construction, called modular, out of the Manufactured Housing Board and under MOCA where all other construction oversight exists under the Maine Uniform Building Code, Code Enforcement and Fire Inspection. Manufactured housing (mobile homes) is different than off-site construction, and are even financed with different tools than traditional mortgages because they are mobile.

Today's modular construction has little in common with mobile homes. Modular construction follows the same building codes, fire codes and code enforcement as site-built and therefore belongs with that oversight as part of MOCA.

MAHC supports LD210 and looks forward to discussing options for long-term investments in housing in the coming months. Thank you for this opportunity to share our testimony today.

3i Housing of Maine
55 Weston Avenue
AARP Maine
ABS Consulting, Gray
Acorn Engineering, Inc.
Alfred Cook Construction, Portland
Anew Development LLC, Portland
Apartments for People LLC, Belfast
Archeype Architects, Portland
Associated General Contractors of Maine
Auburn Housing Authority
Augusta Housing Authority
Avelto Housing, Portland
Bangor Area Homeless Shelter
Bangor Housing
Bangor Savings Bank
Bank of New Hampshire, Falmouth
Both Housing
Both Savings Institution
Bethelther Enterprise
Benchmark Construction, Westbrook
Boston Financial Investment Management
Bowman Constructors, Newport
Brunswick Housing Authority
Comden National Bank
Carpenter Associates
Catholic Charities of Maine
CEI, Brunswick
Cemex Construction, Portland
City of Portland Department of Housing
Clear Insurance, Portland
Community Concepts, Lewiston
Community Housing of Maine, Portland
Consign Construction Co., Inc.
Cooperative Development Institute, South Freeport
Cooperative Fund of the Northeast
CREA, LLC
Creative Associates, Westbrook
Cross Financial Corp., Portland
Cumberland County
Curtis Theater, Portland
CVS Architects, Portland
Developers Collaborative, Portland
Development Services of New England, Freeport
Devetail Consulting
DrummondWoodsum, Portland
Dunbar & Brown Construction
Dunbar & Brown Construction
Edge Point Development, LLC
Eaton Realty Consulting Group, Augusta
Eric Burmeister
Evertown, Portland
Fairfax, Town of
Fort Fairfield Residential Development Corp.
Four Directions Development Corporation, Orono
Freeport Community Services
Freeport Housing Trust
Furniture Friends
Gannett Construction, Augusta
Gawron Turgeon Architects, Scarborough
Genesis Community Loan Fund, Brunswick
Great Falls Construction, Gorham
Grannex Palaski Consulting LLC, Portland
GrainSmart Maine
Habitat for Humanity of Greater Portland
Habitat for Humanity York County
Homedel Lumber, Casco
Healthy Androscoggin, Lewiston
Hebert Construction
Home Start, Peaks Island
Homeless Voices for Justice, Portland
Housing Foundation, Orono
Housing Initiatives of New England, Portland
Housing Partnership, Portsmouth, NH
Hunt Capital Partners LLC, El Paso, TX
Island Institute, Rockland
Islesboro Affordable Property
Jensen Baird Gardner & Henry, Portland
John A. Smith, Portland
Kaplan Thompson Architects, Portland
Kennebec Savings Bank, Augusta
Kennebec Valley Community Action, Waterville
Kennebunk Savings
KeyBank
Knox County Homeless Coalition
Late City Investments, LLC
Landry/French Construction, Scarborough
Landscape Consulting, LLC, Augusta
Lassel Architects, South Berwick
LB Development Partners, Portland
Leasing Age Maine & New Hampshire
Lewiston Housing Authority
MSI Bank
Machias Savings Bank
Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services
Maine Community Action Partnership
Maine Community Bank
Maine Department of Health & Human Services
Maine Equal Justice
Maine Immigrant's Rights Coalition
Maine Public Health Association
Maine Real Estate Managers Association
Maine State Building & Construction Trades
Maine Workforce Housing LLC, Portland
Mama en Mono, Millbridge
Main Development LLC, Yarmouth
Mascocoma Bank
Midcoast Regional Housing Trust
NBT Bank
Nickerson & O'Day, Inc., Bangor
North Haven Sustainable Housing
Northeast Rental Housing
Norway Savings Bank
Old Town Housing Authority
Old Well CRAs, South Portland
Penobscot General Contractors
Periqui, Bangor
People's United Bank
PM Construction
Portland Builders
Portland Housing Authority
Prestige Street, Portland
Preservation Management, South Portland
Prestil Fishery, Portland
Raise-Up Housing Cooperative, Lewiston
Realty Resources Management
Rental Housing Alliance of Southern Maine
Rick Whiting
Rumford, Town of
Saco Housing Authority
Scott Simons Architects, Portland
Sea Coast Management Company, Topsham
Seaside House, Portland
Silver Street Development Corporation, Portland
South Portland Housing Authority
Sunbank Group, Yarmouth
St. Germain
Sunrise Opportunities, Machias
S W Cole Engineering, Gray
Szenton Company
TD Bank
Tedford Housing, Brunswick
The Coleb Group, Saco
The Eagle Point Companies, South Portland
The Housing Foundation
The Park Danforth, Portland
Thornon Tamazetti, Portland
Through These Doors, Portland
Total Construction Management, Winterport
TPD Construction Co., Sanford
United Way of Greater Portland
Utile, Inc.
Veterans Inc., Lewiston
Volunteers of America of Northern ME
Washington County Assoc for Ret. Citizens
Westbrook Housing Authority
Western Maine Community Action, E. Wilton
Winton Scott Architects
Wishcomper Companies, Portland
WJC & Associates
Wright-Ryan Construction, Portland
Yarmouth Housing Collaborative
Year-Round Housing Corp., Long Island
York County Community Action, Sanford
York Housing Authority
Zachau Construction, Freeport
Zero Energy Design