

Blum, Alyster

From: Jack Beaudoin <jebeaudoin@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2025 11:05 AM
To: Cmte HED
Subject: LD# 1106, An Act to Provide for the Redevelopment of the Island Nursing Home in Hancock County into Affordable Senior Housing

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

This message originates from outside the Maine Legislature.

Dear Members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee,

I write today to recommend a favorable and unanimous “ought to pass” report on LD# 1106, An Act to Provide for the Redevelopment of the Island Nursing Home in Hancock County into Affordable Senior Housing. As members of the committee are well aware, the entire state is suffering from a severe shortage of affordable housing, and Deer Isle is no exception. In fact, the situation here may be more acute here than elsewhere — over the past 5-7 years, much of our housing stock was acquired by out-of-state residents looking for a refuge from the COVID-19 pandemic and converted into seasonal use. What housing remains in the “affordable” category is often substandard, especially for our seniors who can no longer work and are trying to make ends meet on a fixed-income pension or Social Security. My wife and I have seen this first-hand, as we volunteer to provide support for our aging residents in the form of food pantry support, meals and socialization, and transportation.

Islanders are not looking for a hand out. Our local workforce housing nonprofit, Island Workforce Housing, recently constructed 10 rental apartments for our year-round workforce. These rentals are serving members of our local workforce who are making 60-120% of Hancock County’s Area Median Income (AMI) as defined yearly by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development and adjusted by household size. Perhaps the most impressive fact is that this \$1.7 million project was COMPLETELY funded by donations from islanders. But that project addresses only a small portion of the need for safe, affordable housing stock, and targets working-age residents.

Former Vice President Hubert Humphrey famously said, “The moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; those who are in the shadows of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped.” Our senior residents have been left behind by the state and federal governments — there are currently no nursing homes at all in Hancock County and only one in northern Penobscot County (source: <https://www.newscentermaine.com/article/news/politics/maine-politics/long-term-care-leaders-urge-more-funding-to-prevent-more-closures-of-nursing-homes-maine/97-843a8452-f8c3-4dce-8ef3-4e684455201c>). While it is too late to save the facility as a nursing home, the structure is sound and can be put to use to help our aging residents.

In sum, redeveloping the Island Nursing Home into affordable, senior housing will improve the health and well-being of Maine seniors who have served in our nation’s armed forces, provided labor to the state’s

economic engines, taught in our schools and cared for the sick. It's the least we can do for America's greatest generation. Please support this bill, and thank you for considering it!

John Beaudoin
35 School Street
Stonington ME 04681