



ISLAND NURSING HOME

AND CARE CENTER

587 North Deer Isle Rd., Deer Isle, Maine 04627

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and Members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee. My name is Skip Greenlaw, and I live in Stonington. I am Vice President of the Board of Directors of the Island Nursing Home in Deer Isle, now dba as Home Port. I stand before you today in strong support of LD# 1106, An Act To Provide Funds for the Redevelopment of the Island Nursing Home in Hancock County Into Affordable Senior Housing.

I want to thank Rep. Eaton for sponsoring this legislation and to Sen. Grohoski, Rep. Milliken, Rep. Friedmann, and Rep. Ray for co-sponsoring this legislation.

The Island Nursing Home opened in 1983 with 50 skilled and residential care beds with expansion to 70 beds in the late 1990s. We were forced to close in October 2021 due to a lack of adequate staff and the prohibitive cost of contract nursing. We are grateful to the legislature and Governor Mills for making sufficient funds to pay for contract nursing in hospitals and nursing homes during the Covid pandemic. This shortage of nurses and inadequate reimbursement has caused the closure of over 40 nursing homes in Maine since 2014. We feel that the State of Maine has not sufficiently supported the care of the large aging population of Maine.

After closing, the Board tried to reopen as a Residential Care facility, but insufficient funds from donors, endowment funds, and projected MaineCare reimbursement would leave a yearly financial gap of \$500,000.

The decision was made to convert the building to senior housing- converting 2 patient rooms into an apartment with a bedroom, living room, a kitchenette, and bathroom with a shower. The first apartment is under construction and almost completed at an estimated cost of between

\$65,000 to \$75,000. We have been told that this is an extremely low price for construction of an apartment in today's economy. We anticipate having 23 units. The building is 42 years old and has been well maintained, but with this renovation we will make property improvements to insure the comfort and safety for our seniors, including a laundry room. We will also maintain the common spaces in the building for residents to socialize and have community functions.

While the senior population is our priority, given the senior housing shortage, we will make some apartments available to essential workers depending on the senior demand.

While we understand that State resources are very tight, we know that you all consider housing a priority. The investment we are asking you to make for the reconstructed apartments will generate some badly needed housing at a very reasonable cost per unit. We estimate that we will need to spend close to \$2,000,000 to complete the renovation of our patient rooms into 23 apartments. We have \$500,000 of our own resources to pay for a portion of the construction. We are currently negotiating a loan with a local bank. We will be conducting a capital campaign as soon as the apartment is completed. We will have an open house shortly to show off the one finished apartment.

Our primary service area includes not only the towns of Deer Isle and Stonington, but also Blue Hill, Brooklin, Brooksville, Sedgwick, and Isle au Haut. We will gladly accept requests for renting an apartment from citizens of our State if we do not fill the 23 apartments. It would be a huge benefit to provide this additional housing for seniors in these communities. We respectfully request the committee to pass this bill out of committee as a unanimous "ought to pass" and fund it at the end of the session.

Thank you very much for your attention. I am pleased to answer any questions you might have.