



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE 04333-0002

(207) 287-1400

TTY: Maine Relay 711

Poppy Arford

8 Quarry Road
Brunswick, ME 04011
(207) 522-1997

Poppy.Arford@legislature.maine.gov

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Testimony of Rep. Poppy Arford in support of
**LD 1179, “An Act to Establish Minimum Safety Standards for the Construction and Use of
Temporary Emergency Housing”**
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and distinguished members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee: My name is Poppy Arford, and I proudly represent State House District 101s’ business area, residential neighborhoods, farmland, coastal and river waters of Brunswick.

I offer this testimony in support of LD 1179, “An Act to Establish Minimum Safety Standards for the Construction and Use of Temporary Emergency Housing.” As the sponsor, Rep. Macias, has described, this bill would provide municipalities with the guidance they need to safely locate temporary emergency housing for veterans within their borders. I agree wholeheartedly that we must provide men and woman who have defended our country with the most basic necessity of life: safe emergency housing when they find themselves unhoused and in need.

I respect and understand that this committee hears a comprehensive mix of bills to remedy the harms resulting from Maine’s ongoing housing crisis. My understanding is also that the type of emergency housing we are discussing is ALREADY an available remedy, already easing the housing crisis burden for Maine veterans and their families. At this time, 45 total units exist, 35 are deployed statewide, 6 more are under construction, and 12 additional units are on order. We need one in Brunswick, yet to date, the lack of State rules and guidance on acceptable, safe heating units has prevented us from making final arrangements to host one.

In support of adequate units and locations statewide, I join with Rep. Macias in asking that LD 1179 receive an OTP vote. I also urge the Commissioner of Public Safety to move swiftly once LD 1179 becomes law to issue interim guidance while permanent rules are developed, so that organizations like Boothbay V.E.T.S. may continue their undeniably good work to house Maine veterans.

In closing, I thank you for your time and consideration of my testimony.