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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Testimony of Representative Holly Eaton in support of
**LD 1237, An Act to Support Adult Family Care Homes and Residential Care
Facilities That Are Small or Located in Rural and Isolated Areas of the State**
Before the Health and Human Services Committee

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and distinguished members of the Health and Human Services Committee, my name is Representative Holly Eaton, and I proudly represent House District 15, which includes the communities of Deer Isle, Stonington, Brooklin, Tremont, Southwest Harbor, Frenchboro, Swan's Island, Isle au Haut and Vinalhaven.

I'm here today in strong support of LD 1237 because this bill addresses a heartbreaking and ongoing reality in my district and across rural Maine: for far too many families, access to elder care has become nearly impossible.

When the Island Nursing Home closed in 2021, it left not just my district, but all of Hancock County, without a single nursing home. That closure has had devastating consequences. Seniors who had hoped to age in place near their loved ones were instead sent hours away, often across ferry routes and into unfamiliar counties. Families have struggled to maintain regular visits due to transportation barriers and long travel times. The loss of that facility continues to ripple outward, leaving many residents anxious about what will happen when their own loved ones need care.

And this is not just a local issue—it reflects a larger trend. Over the past two decades, Maine has seen the closure of numerous long-term care facilities. As these options disappear, the gaps in our system grow wider, and the burden falls increasingly on families who are already stretched thin.

Adult family care homes offer a meaningful path forward. They provide a model of care that reflects the values of our rural and island communities—keeping people close to home, connected to community and supported in a familiar setting. LD 1237 creates the opportunity to expand this model and ensure that aging Mainers are not forced to leave behind everything they know just to access care.

District 15: Brooklin, Deer Isle, Eagle Island Township, Frenchboro, Southwest Harbor,
Stonington, Swan's Island, Tremont, Isle au Haut, Vinalhaven

I strongly urge the committee to support LD 1237. Let's honor our elders by investing in solutions that meet them where they are and ensure no Mainer is left without care simply because of where they live.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration.