

**Testimony in Support of LD 1167 Before the Committee on Housing and Economic
Development on April 15, 2025**

Good afternoon, Senator Curry, Representative Gere and members of the Committee on Housing and Economic Development.

I am Todd Bachelder, speaking today as the Board Chair of Healthy Homeworks.

LD 2003 was passed by the Legislature in 2022 to help alleviate housing affordability issues. Its purpose was to loosen zoning restrictions and increase the supply of affordable housing throughout our state. This was an important step forward when it comes to housing policy, but it is by no means a sufficient step.

Over the course of the past two years, residents in many of our towns and cities have managed to stop numerous low- and median-income housing initiatives; projects planned for Kingfield, Auburn, Cape Elizabeth, Cumberland, Freeport and South Portland were all abandoned.

While we might agree that Maine needs much more housing, too often concerns about sprawl, demands on existing infrastructure, the loss of green space, and changes in a community's character, have greatly impeded the state's housing progress.

I thank Representative McCabe and Senator Rotundo for co-sponsoring LD 1167 and the creation of a Maine Housing pilot program to promote the rehab of our existing housing stock for first-time homeowners. The adage - reduce, reuse, repair, recycle – makes both economic and environmental sense, and it ought to be applied to Maine's housing challenge as well.

Rehabilitation of our existing housing stock will not result in sprawl, a need for additional infrastructure, or a loss of green space. It will help us to maintain the historic character of our communities.

It will also help us to turn around neighborhoods that have been sorely neglected - neighborhoods in which there is often an increased risk of crime, a rise in unhealthy behaviors, and a cycle of poverty from which neighborhood families are hard pressed to escape.

Passage of LD 1167 will encourage others to follow in Amy Smith's and Healthy Homework's footsteps. It will make a home purchase possible for those priced out of today's housing market. Stable housing will give families what should be a pathway to financial security and an opportunity to build wealth. It will give homeowners a stake and

vested interest in their neighborhood's ongoing rehabilitation. Last but not least, this legislation should have a positive multiplier impact. Healthier neighborhoods should both reduce demands on local and state services, as well as increase local and state tax revenues.

I thank you for your consideration - and urge your support - for what would be a potentially impactful Maine Housing pilot program as outlined in LD 1167.

Respectively submitted by Todd F. Bachelder, Board Chair of Healthy Homeworks