

Testimony in Support of

LD 1770: An Act to Provide Immediate and Long-term Property Tax Relief to Maine Households

May 1, 2025

Chairpersons Senator Grohoski and Representative Cloutier and honorable members of the Taxation Committee:

My name is Kerry Leichtman. I am a Certified Maine Assessor serving the jurisdictions of Camden and Rockport. I am also a member of MMA's Legislative Policy Committee and am testifying today in strong support of LD 1770.

The LPC's sole focus in this legislative session has been property tax relief, both direct relief to taxpayers such as bills that offer more generous Homestead Exemption deductions, for example, and indirect relief by supporting issues that would ease pressure on mil rates, such as expanding the reimbursements for GA expenses.

We also have segregated our interest and efforts into proposals that offer immediate relief and others that are forward looking by offering long-term relief.

Our system is collapsing under the weight of rapidly rising property values on the one hand and rapidly rising costs for just about everything on the other. Even with the real estate market having slowed down some, prices have not declined.

LD 1770 seeks to form a task force that would get to work immediately to identify the problems in our system and recommend how to adjust to the new realities.

For the short term, LD 1770 enhances the property tax fairness credit by increasing the benefit base. You have a few bills that propose similar adjustments to the credit. I would suggest you use the proposal that offers the most generous increases and incorporate that into LD 1770.

Property tax relief has never been more necessary. It would be ideal if any of us had all the answers. As this Legislative session has shown there are many ideas out there, some good, some not. Each one attempts to address a piece of the problem. The task force proposed in LD 1770 will look at the problem holistically. This approach, it seems to me, is the right approach. The people of Maine not only need this kind of thinking to take place, they need it to succeed.

I strongly urge you to support LD 1770.

Thank you for considering my testimony.