

State of Maine  
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Testimony of Scott Brown, Director of School Facilities

In Support of: L.D. 1312

An Act to Provide a Source of Revenue for School Construction and for the Land for Maine's Future Trust Fund

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

Sponsored by: Senator Pierce

Date: November 14, 2025

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs:

My name is Scott Brown, and I serve as the Director of School Facilities at the Department of Education (DOE). I am here today representing the Department, speaking in support of the proposed amendment for L.D. 1312, An Act to Provide a Source of Revenue for School Construction and for the Land for Maine's Future Trust Fund.

This amended bill proposes to provide 50% of the investment proceeds earned by the budget stabilization fund, after the 18% limitation, to the Major Capital School Construction Fund, 25% of the investment proceeds to the Land for Maine's Future Trust Fund, and 25% of the investment proceeds to the Irrevocable Trust Funds for Other Post-Employment Benefits.

The Maine Department of Education sees the revenue stream proposed in this bill as a welcome contribution to a pressing and growing school construction funding need. Since 2019, the Mills Administration, in partnership with the Maine Legislature, has provided an unprecedented \$615 million for the renovation and construction of Maine schools. Despite these record investments, the need for construction and renovation of public school facilities in the State far outpaces available capacity. Additionally, in the years ahead, Maine's aging school infrastructure is expected to require even more investment.

In order to ensure that every student has access to a safe, modern, accessible public school no matter where they live, Governor Mills created the Governor's Commission on School Construction through Executive Order in late 2024, the first such effort in more than 25 years. The Commission's preliminary report, delivered in April of 2025, outlined the priorities that the Commission intended to explore toward the goal of formulating a well-informed and feasible plan for addressing the current and future needs of public school facilities. This approach will include a consideration of law, regulation, financing, and equity. Among the initial findings in the preliminary report, the Commission noted that, of Maine's 600 schools, approximately 500

will require replacement or renovation in the next 20 years. Conservatively, they estimate that cost will be 11 billion dollars, assuming 25 schools per year. The final report is expected near the start of the Second Session of the 132nd Legislature, and a briefing can be provided to the Committee upon request.

While the Maine DOE supports the efforts of the sponsor and the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee to address the need for school construction funds through a new revenue source as proposed in this bill, we do suggest the Committee considers directing the investment proceeds to the Revolving Renovation Fund rather than the Major Capitol School Construction fund. I am happy to answer any questions the Committee may have, and I will be available to provide additional information for work sessions on this bill.