

Joint Standing Committee on Taxation

Testimony of: Laurie Miller, Executive Director, Housing Authority of the City of Old Town

In Favor of LD 2116, An Act to Make Permanent the Affordable Housing Income Tax Credit

Date: January 21, 2026 – 1:00 pm

Good afternoon, Chair Grohoski, Chair Sayre, and members of the Committee,

My name is Laurie Miller, and I am the Executive Director of the Housing Authority of the City of Old Town. We provide affordable housing options for families, seniors, and individuals in the greater Old Town and Orono area. I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of LD 2116, which would remove the sunset on Maine's Affordable Housing Tax Credit.

The Housing Authority of the City of Old Town is a small mission driven organization without a dedicated development team to build new properties from the ground up. For this reason, we have focused our efforts on preserving the existing affordable housing in our community. We have a long and respected history of managing Rural Development 515 projects for other owners, and it was a natural step for us to begin purchasing these properties when owners decided to sell them. Our goal is to preserve affordability, make much needed repairs, and support residents who might otherwise face displacement. Rising rents, a shortage of affordable units, and an aging housing stock all threaten the safety and well-being of our residents.

In October 2024, we purchased Main View Apartments in Orono, ME. Main View consists of 24 one-bedroom apartments. When word spread that the long-time owner wanted to sell the property, residents were understandably concerned about potential rent increases and the possibility of losing their homes. The Maine Affordable Housing Tax Credit was instrumental in making this purchase possible, allowing us to fund essential repairs which improved the life safety at the property, improved energy efficiency and added decades of life into the units. Most importantly, we were able to ensure that residents could remain in their homes. Without the credit, acquiring the property would not have been financially feasible given the costs and limited financing options.

Preserving affordable housing in rural communities like ours requires collaboration, resources, and reliable tools where options are limited and new construction is rare. Removing the sunset on LD 2116 would provide the predictability needed to plan preservation projects, secure financing, and protect residents from displacement. Preservation work often takes time, but its impact is lasting: once an affordable unit is lost in a rural community, it is seldom replaced.

For many of our residents who are elderly individuals, families, and people with disabilities, losing affordable housing is not just inconvenient; it can be life-altering.

Protecting existing units is essential, and the Maine Affordable Housing Tax Credit is a critical tool in making that possible.

For these reasons, the Housing Authority of the City of Old Town strongly urges the Committee to support LD 2116 and extend the Maine Affordable Housing Tax Credit. Thank you for your time and consideration.