

MAINE REGISTERS OF DEEDS ASSOCIATION

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LD 2124: An Act to Support Emergency Shelter Funding Using Revenue from the Real Estate Transfer Tax

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development, thank you for your service to the great State of Maine and for allowing me the opportunity to present today.

My name is Cherri Crockett, and I serve as the Register of Deeds for Oxford County and the Secretary of the Maine Registers of Deeds Association. I share in submitting testimony on behalf of our 17 Registers against the use of the County administrative fee for the collection of Transfer Tax that is targeted in LD 2124.

Please understand when I share that the Registers of Deeds and our respective Counties are **NOT** against the funding of Emergency Shelters, in fact, agree that the shelters do require a funding source, but **NOT** at the expense of further burdening YOU and I as taxpayers.

With our 2024 data, the last full year the Registries retained the 10%, the Counties collected more than \$56.5M (\$56,595,116.03) in Transfer Tax **on behalf of the State**. Of that, we remitted the State's 90%, which was nearly \$51M (\$50,935,577.39). The remaining 10%, retained as the County's administrative fee across all 16 counties, was just over \$5.5M (\$5,659,508.61).

With the proposal to permanently decrease the county administrative fee from 10% down to 8.2% the estimated total cost to our 16 counties stands at over \$1.1M (\$1,143,748.16) based on 2025 collections (see attached worksheet). This represents an approximate increase of 4.5% to already strained county budget requirements.

What does this mean for Maine Counties, and more specifically, YOU, ME, OUR CHILDREN, OUR ELDERLY PARENTS and GRANDPARENTS as taxpayers?

This means we continue to erode the livelihood of those who take pride in being responsible, productive Mainers at the cost of an estimated 4.5% INCREASE to our tax commitment. Absorbed through property tax.

I know YOU and I don't need to be reminded of our current tax commitments in each of our municipalities, and the strain our citizens are under. I know I don't need to remind you of the uncertainty of jail funding or unorganized territory funding requirements.

We all recognize that we're being asked to do more with less.

Standing here today, on behalf of the Registers Association and our 16 counties and the property owners we represent, I urge you to seek an alternative funding source to satisfy the needs of Emergency Shelters. The Maine Registers of Deeds Association is against the funding source for LD 2124 and suggests this bill be voted Ought Not To Pass.

Thank you for your time.

2025 Transfer tax comparison
All Counties

10%		
1)	Real Estate Transfer Tax collected (including CITT & FPTT)	\$63,541,564.42
2)	County's 10% Commission	\$6,354,156.44
30	Remittance to state 90%	\$57,187,407.98

9.20%		
1)	Real Estate Transfer Tax collected (including CITT & FPTT)	\$63,541,564.42
2)	County's 9.2% Commission	\$5,845,823.93
3)	Remittance to state 90.8%	\$57,695,740.50

8.20%		
1)	Real Estate Transfer Tax collected (including CITT & FPTT)	\$63,541,564.42
2)	County's 8.2% Commission	\$5,210,408.28
3)	Remittance to state 91.8%	\$58,331,156.14

Summary		
	10% commission	\$6,354,156.44
	Retained 9.2%	\$5,845,823.93
	County loss	-\$508,332.52
	Retained 8.2%	\$5,210,408.28
	Additional county loss if adopted	-\$635,415.64
	Total county loss if adopted (10% down to 8.2%)	-\$1,143,748.16

THIS LOSS TO COUNTY REVENUE REPRESENTS A 4.5% INCREASE TO PROPERTY TAXES STATEWIDE