

19 Colby Street
Waterville



Mid-Maine
Homeless Shelter
& Services
Hope Starts Here
www.shelterme.org

Waterville, ME
04901

February 10, 2026

The Housing & Economic Development Committee
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and Honorable Members of the Committee:

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

My name is Dr. Katie Spencer White, and I am speaking today on behalf of the Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter & Services and the people we serve in Waterville. We are here to express our strong support for **LD 2124: An Act to Support Emergency Shelter Funding Using Revenue from the Real Estate Transfer Tax**.

Shelter operators like us are closest to the ground. We see—every day—how fragile Maine’s emergency response system has become, and why **ongoing, predictable funding** is essential to keeping people safe and keeping doors open.

I want to acknowledge how important last year’s one-year funding through LD 698 was. That support wasn’t theoretical for us. It kept shelters operating and prevented immediate crisis across the state—from the large rural regions served by Homeless Services of Aroostook, H.O.M.E. Inc., and Rumford Group Homes to service-center shelters like Mid-Maine Homeless Shelter.

But that funding was temporary. It was a band-aid, not a solution. Once those dollars are gone, we are back to the same place: nervous staff, nervous boards, and many of us relying on emergency credit just to keep the doors open.

Without stable support, Maine is going to see more shelter closures. We’ve already lived the consequences. LD 698 arrived too late to save the York County Adult Shelter, which closed permanently in May 2025. That closure didn’t just affect Alfred or York County—it created a major gap across an entire region.

Every time a shelter closes, capacity drops, suffering increases, and pressure shifts to police, EMS, hospitals, municipalities, and neighboring shelters that are already full.

“Providing Emergency Food & Shelter to Homeless and Displaced Persons in central Maine”
“Founded by the Interfaith Council in 1990”

The human suffering that results from shelter closures is incalculable. **A 2025 study showed that even temporary shelter access reduces crime, emergency room use, and mortality.** When shelters cannot operate fully, more people end up outside—leading to higher illness, injury, trauma, and death. And the financial costs to municipalities, law enforcement, and hospitals grow dramatically.

When shelters are strong, they not only alleviate human suffering, they add economic value. Take Waterville as an example. Recent comprehensive planning documents highlight Waterville’s diversified and strengthening economy—bolstered by higher education, healthcare, and ongoing downtown investment—and forecast continued positive demographic and economic trends that reinforce the city’s overall resilience.

By preventing the emergence of unsheltered homelessness, our shelter plays a direct role in sustaining this progress, ensuring that public spaces remain safe, businesses remain accessible, and the local workforce remains stable.

LD 2124 offers a permanent solution to shelter underfunding and would fund it with a stable revenue source that grows with inflation: the real estate transfer tax. That matters, because shelters can plan responsibly when we know what resources we can count on. We cannot do that with one-time fixes that arrive mid-year or after a crisis has already hit.

Keeping shelters open isn’t just the compassionate choice. It’s the fiscally responsible choice.

LD 2124 gives Maine a practical, sustainable way to keep its emergency shelter system functioning. Shelters are doing everything we can—stretching dollars, fundraising, relying on volunteers—but we cannot close a gap this large on our own. A stable state, local, and regional partnership is the only way to prevent further closures and keep Mainers safe.

Thank you for supporting a long-term solution for communities across Maine.

Warm regards,



Dr. Katie Spencer White
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