



## Testimony in Support of L.D. 2212 – Part T

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development, my name is Jennifer Hawkins. I am the President and CEO at Avesta Housing. Avesta is the largest non-profit affordable housing developer in Northern New England. We currently own and manage over 3,000 homes across Maine and New Hampshire with nearly 4,700 residents. Our portfolio includes housing all over Maine from York and Cumberland counties to Oxford, Franklin, Somerset, and Lincoln counties.

Avesta strongly supports L.D. 2212 and the funding allocated in Part T. The proposed \$70M will help address the most pressing housing needs in our state for low- and middle-income Mainers. There are four key reasons why Avesta lends its unequivocal support to L.D. 2212 and why I am personally here to testify today.

**First, smart state investments unlock federal housing tax credits.** State investments leverage private and federal funding. In Avesta's case, that leverage is generally \$3 in private and federal investment to every \$1 from the State of Maine.

**Second, state investments in affordable housing have a long-lasting impact.** Take Avesta's two-phase 74-apartment community called Elm Ridge in Kennebunk. Elm Ridge's apartments will be exclusively reserved for low-income older adults for 45 years. Given our average length of residency, the capital investment in these 74 apartments will ensure a projected 750 individuals have safe, stable housing. I would argue that the denominator in the math equation is not the number of units constructed, but rather the number of people who benefit from housing that is affordable. This is what strategic housing capital does – it helps successive households for decades into the future.

**Third, there are numerous shovel-ready housing developments with local municipal review approval that remain stuck until essential capital support can be awarded.** Elm Ridge is one such example. It received final planning board approval in early 2025, and the project met all MaineHousing criteria. However, because resources are oversubscribed, Elm Ridge fell short of a financing award. As a result, it is sitting on the sidelines waiting for the next opportunity to reapply. Other developments from colleagues are in a similar position, including those located in Belfast, Bangor, and Augusta. Part T in L.D. 2212 represents a real opportunity to jumpstart these shovel-ready developments and increase Maine's long-term affordable housing supply.

**And lastly, the targeted allocation of the proposed \$70M will serve new communities and more households than traditional housing investments are generally able to help.**

Avesta appreciates the need to build more housing of every shape and size in every corner of the state. L.D. 2212 will support proven programs and will allocate resources to two new initiatives, one of which is the middle-income program for households who earn too much for traditional “capital A” affordable housing but too little to pay the rent or mortgage for market-rate housing. Avesta supports this effort and strongly encourages this committee to ensure any new program that is developed is nimble in its rules and deliberate in its allocation of resources.

We know housing is one of the greatest needs facing Maine families. We also know that the accessibility of housing is directly correlated to our state’s economic success. Maine needs bold action and consistent investment to build homes that Maine families and seniors can afford. Avesta urges the committee to support Part T and its various housing initiatives. There is no singular way to produce and preserve housing. Part T aligns with that reality.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Hawkins  
President and CEO  
Avesta Housing