

Ann Sweeney
Hope for Homeless
LD 1909

May 12, 2023

Senator Stacy Brenner

Representative Lori Gramlich

Members of the Joint Standing Environment and Natural Resources

100 State House Station Augusta, Maine 04333

RE: Support of LD 1909: "An Act to Modernize Maine's Beverage Container Redemption Law"

Senator Brenner, Representative Gramlich, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources my name is Ann Sweeney and I serve as the President of Hope for Homeless based in Bangor.

Hope for Homeless is a 501 (c)(3) founded in June 2020 by my husband and me with the purpose of serving unmet needs of our homeless neighbors. Our mission is to improve the lives of those experiencing homelessness by filling resource gaps and bolstering existing efforts. We began by distributing supplies and gift cards around the holidays to people in need. Since that time, because of the generosity of other individuals and businesses, the organization has grown substantially.

Local homeless shelters do the best that they can with the resources they have to provide safe, stable housing for those in need. It is the extra stuff, like new coats, socks, or snacks, they sometimes have difficulty providing. Through the Hope for Homeless Facebook page, I can reach out to followers with specific requests, and, because of the generosity of our communities, the need is almost always met. For example, when the warming shelter opened in Bangor, there were concerns about having enough coffee. I was able to utilize the Hope for Homeless network to organize an effort ensuring there was enough coffee, creamer, and sugar for everyone. Homelessness could befall anyone, so it is important those in need are treated with dignity and respect. When we assist those most vulnerable and help them to succeed, the entire community benefits.

Besides direct donation of goods, many people donate financially to Hope for Homeless, and others utilize the CLYNK to Give Partners program. Every month Hope for Homeless receives a check from CLYNK so long as the account has a balance of at least \$50.00. So far, through the CLYNK program, Hope for Homeless has raised over \$15,000. That money has been invaluable to our efforts, during the last two years the funding from CLYNK went 100% to a homeless warming center in Bangor.

This is why I support LD 1909. CLYNK has been a tremendous resource in our efforts to help the homeless here in Maine. LD 1909 will recognize their unique redemption system and allow them to continue to operate successfully, thereby helping my organization continue to grow.

Thank you for your time, I urge you to pass LD 1909.