

Cynthia Cushing
Readfield
LD 698

Dear Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee,

My name is Cynthia Cushing, and I'm a resident of Readfield, Maine. I'm writing to support LD 698: An Act to Sustain Emergency Homeless Shelters in Maine.

Maine's emergency shelters are necessary; they provide vulnerable individuals and families with a place to stay when there are no other options. With the increase in costs for daily living needs (i.e. eggs are \$8 per dozen currently), and the ongoing crisis of unhoused people in our state, shelters across Maine are struggling to match the need. Too many people are sleeping outside. As we have seen, there are already not enough beds to meet this need.

MaineHousing reports that it costs \$102 per night for a shelter bed in Maine to operate. The state's current Shelter Operating Subsidy provides \$7 per bed per night, and has done so since 2016. This doesn't even cover the cost of one washing of the sheets, which must be done regularly. This is why I support LD 698; this bill will increase the contribution to \$18 a bed per night, which is much needed, to help keep Maine's emergency shelters functioning safely.

Thank you.