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## **Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association**

In Support for

LD 698 - *An Act to Sustain Emergency Homeless Shelters in Maine*

March 18, 2025

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Sen. Curry, Rep. Gere and esteemed members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee, my name is Rebecca Graham, and I am submitting testimony in support for LD 698, *An Act to Sustain Emergency Homeless Shelters in Maine* at the direct of MMA's Legislative Policy Committee (LPC). Our LPC is composed of municipal officials from across Maine, elected by their peers to represent communities with vastly different enforcement staff, resources and capacities.

Where they exist, homeless shelters are barely able to address the need for their services and also not able to accept some individuals based on their active substance use. This places a community in an unsolvable position without adequate residential treatment units, individual agency, and responsive shelter capacity for the spectrum of need found in the homeless population, individuals are left with little choice but public camping.

Currently, shelters receive a paltry \$7 a night per bed for filling this role, while the MaineHousing study indicates the cost of a shelter bed is \$102 per night to actually run. This bill would increase the state funding to roughly \$18 a night per bed from multiple revenue resources, including taxation from visitors to vacationland. This is a small portion of what is needed, and a step in the right direction to provide more all in funding for the communities who are shouldering this burden and ultimately drawing from other communities because of available services.

For these reasons, officials support the effort outline in LD 698, and hope that the committee will consider its passage and additionally consider increasing the allocation to help offset the very local burden of filling the gap between actual cost and exponential need.