



MAINE AFFORDABLE HOUSING COALITION

Joint Standing Committee on Housing & Economic Development

Testimony of Laura Mitchell, Executive Director, Maine Affordable Housing Coalition, 3.18.25

in favor of LD698 – An Act to Sustain Emergency Homeless Shelters in Maine.

Sponsored by Senator Talbot Ross

Hello, Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development.

My name is Laura Mitchell. I am the Executive Director of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition. MAHC is a nonprofit with 140 member organizations working to create and preserve affordable homes in our state.

MAHC is in favor of LD698 that will provide a minimal increase in the funding for emergency shelters to meet inflation and cost increases since the funding was capped in 2016.

According to MaineHousing, in 2016 when the state's nightly Shelter Operating subsidy for was set at \$7 per bed night, there were 1,200 Maine people experiencing homelessness. Last year, there were 2,700 people in need of shelter. Emergency shelters are struggling to meet these growing needs, let alone stay open on the State's flat operating funding over the last 8 years.

MaineHousing reports that a shelter bed in Maine costs \$102 a night to operate. Maine's emergency shelters have faced rising costs from inflation and had to expand services to keep communities safe. **LD 698 will right size the State's Shelter Operating subsidy to \$18 a bed per night, helping to ensure Maine's emergency shelters remain open.**

While nobody grows up planning to stay in a homeless shelter, shelters are a necessary part of the housing continuum when people face employment, medical, and other emergencies that leave them without a place to call home.

The rising cost of rents and homeownership compared with wages in Maine is leaving more and more people vulnerable to experiencing homelessness. **While the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition knows building and preserving affordable housing is the solution to many of Maine's challenges, the coalition also recognizes that emergency shelters are a vital link in getting people into homes.**

We ask you to support LD698 to keep Maine's emergency shelters open as we work to address Maine's long term housing production goals. **The alternative is more costly emergency room, jail, and medical interventions that the State will be responsible for.**

Thank you for considering this investment in maintaining access to vital emergency housing in Maine.

3i Housing of Maine
 55 Weston Avenue
 AARP Maine
 ABG Consulting, Gray
 Acorn Engineering, Inc.
 Allied Cook Construction, Portland
 Anew Development LLC, Portland
 Apartments for People LLC, Belfast
 Archetype Architects, Portland
 Associated General Contractors of Maine
 Auburn Housing Authority
 Augusta Housing Authority
 Avesta Housing, Portland
 Bangor Area Homeless Shelter
 Bangor Housing
 Bangor Savings Bank
 Bank of New Hampshire, Falmouth
 Bath Housing
 Bath Savings Institution
 Belknap Enterprise
 Benchmark Construction, Westbrook
 Boston Financial Investment Management
 Bowman Constructors, Newport
 Brunswick Housing Authority
 Camden National Bank
 Carpenter Associates
 Catholic Charities of Maine
 CEI, Brunswick
 CHK Architecture, Portland
 City of Portland Department of Housing
 Clark Insurance, Portland
 Community Concepts, Portland
 Community Housing of Maine, Portland
 Conisgli Construction Co., Inc.
 Cooperative Development Institute, South Freeport
 Cooperative Fund of the Northeast
 CREA, LLC
 Credere Associates, Westbrook
 Cross Financial Corp., Portland
 Cumberland County
 Currier Theater, Portland
 CVS Architects, Portland
 Developers Collaborative, Portland
 Development Services of New England, Freeport
 Dovetail Consulting
 DrummondWoodsum, Portland
 Ducas Construction, Inc.
 Dunbar & Brawn Construction
 Eagle Point Development, LLC
 Eaton Peabody Consulting Group, Augusta
 Eric Burmeister
 Evernorth, Portland
 Falmouth, Town of
 Fort Fairfield Residential Development Corp.
 Four Directions Development Corporation, Orono
 Freeport Community Services
 Freeport Housing Trust
 Furniture Friends
 Garrison Construction, Augusta
 Gawron Turgeon Architects, Scarborough
 Genesis Community Loan Fund, Brunswick
 Gorham Savings Bank
 Great Falls Construction, Gorham
 Grommes Puleski Consulting LLC, Portland
 Growmark Maine
 Habitat for Humanity of Greater Portland
 Habitat for Humanity York County
 Hawk Lumber, Casco
 Healthy Androscoggin, Lewiston
 Hebert Construction
 Home Start, Peaks Island
 Homeless Voices for Justice, Portland
 Housing Foundation, Orono
 Housing Initiatives of New England, Portland
 Housing Partnership, Portsmouth, NH
 Hunt Capital Partners LLC, El Paso, TX
 Island Institute, Rockland
 Islesboro Affordable Property
 Jensen Baird Gardner & Henry, Portland
 John Anton, Consultant, Portland
 Kaplan Thompson Architects, Portland
 Kennebec Savings Bank, Augusta
 Kennebec Valley Community Action, Waterville
 Kennebunk Savings
 KeyBank
 Knox County Homeless Coalition
 Lake City Investments, LLC
 Landry/French Construction, Scarborough
 Landshelle Consulting, LLC, Augusta
 Lassel Architects, South Berwick
 LB Development Partners, Portland
 LeadingAge Maine & New Hampshire
 Lewiston Housing Authority
 M&T Bank
 Machias Savings Bank
 Maine Bureau of Veterans' Services
 Maine Community Action Partnership
 Maine Community Bank
 Maine Department of Health & Human Services
 Maine Equal Justice
 Maine Immigrants' Rights Coalition
 Maine Public Health Association
 Maine Real Estate Managers Association
 Maine State Building & Construction Trades
 Maine Workforce Housing LLC, Portland
 Mano en Mano, Milbridge
 Mann Development LLC, Yarmouth
 Mascoma Bank
 Midcoast Regional Housing Trust
 NBT Bank
 Nickerson & O'Day, Inc., Bangor
 North Haven Sustainable Housing
 Northeast Rental Housing
 Norway Savings Bank
 Old Town Housing Authority
 One Aisle CJKs, South Portland
 Penobscot General Contractors
 Penquis, Bangor
 Penquis' Limited Bank
 PM Construction
 Portland Builders
 Portland Housing Authority
 Preble Street, Portland
 Preservation Management, South Portland
 Preti Fishery, Portland
 Raise-Op Housing Cooperative, Lewiston
 Realty Resources Management
 Rental Housing Alliance of Southern Maine
 Rick Whiting
 Rumford, Town of
 Sanford Housing Authority
 Scott Simons Architects, Portland
 Sea Coast Management Company, Topsham
 Seaside House, Portland
 Silver Street Development Corporation, Portland
 South Portland Housing Authority
 Southwick Group, Yarmouth
 St. Germain
 Sunrise Opportunities, Machias
 S.W. Cole Engineering, Gray
 Szanton Company
 TD Bank
 Textford Housing, Brunswick
 The Caleb Group, Saco
 The Eagle Point Companies, South Portland
 The Housing Foundation
 The Park Danforth, Portland
 Thornton Tomasetti, Portland
 Through These Doors, Portland
 Total Construction Management, Winterport
 TPD Construction Co., Sanford
 United Way of Greater Portland
 Utile, Inc.
 Veterans Inc., Lewiston
 Volunteers of America of Northern NE
 Washington County Assoc for Ret. Citizens
 Westbrook Housing Authority
 Western Maine Community Action, E. Wilton
 Winton Scott Architects
 Wischmeyer Companies, Portland
 WKC & Associates
 Wright-Ryan Construction, Portland
 Yarmouth Housing Collaborative
 Year-Round Housing Corp., Long Island
 York County Community Action, Sanford
 York Housing Authority
 Zachau Construction, Freeport
 Zero Energy Design
 Zeta Energy, Bangor

Laura Mitchell
Maine Affordable Housing Coalition
LD 698

Testimony of Laura Mitchell, Executive Director, Maine Affordable Housing Coalition, 3.18.25
in favor of LD698 – An Act to Sustain Emergency Homeless Shelters in Maine.
Sponsored by Senator Talbot Ross

Hello, Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development.

My name is Laura Mitchell. I am the Executive Director of the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition.

MAHC is a nonprofit with 140 member organizations working to create and preserve affordable homes in our state.

MAHC is in favor of LD698 that will provide a minimal increase in the funding for emergency shelters to meet inflation and cost increases since the funding was capped in 2016.

According to MaineHousing, in 2016 when the state's nightly Shelter Operating subsidy for was set at \$7 per bed night, there were 1,200 Maine people experiencing homelessness. Last year, there were 2,700 people in need of shelter. Emergency shelters are struggling to meet these growing needs, let alone stay open on the State's flat operating funding over the last 8 years.

MaineHousing reports that a shelter bed in Maine costs \$102 a night to operate. Maine's emergency shelters have faced rising costs from inflation and had to expand services to keep communities safe. LD 698 will right size the State's Shelter Operating subsidy to \$18 a bed per night, helping to ensure Maine's emergency shelters remain open.

While nobody grows up planning to stay in a homeless shelter, shelters are a necessary part of the housing continuum when people face employment, medical, and other emergencies that leave them without a place to call home.

The rising cost of rents and homeownership compared with wages in Maine is leaving more and more people vulnerable to experiencing homelessness. While the Maine Affordable Housing Coalition knows building and preserving affordable housing is the solution to many of Maine's challenges, the coalition also recognizes that emergency shelters are a vital link in getting people into homes.

We ask you to support LD698 to keep Maine's emergency shelters open as we work to address Maine's long term housing production goals. The alternative is more costly emergency room, jail, and medical interventions that the State will be responsible for. Thank you for considering this investment in maintaining access to vital emergency housing in Maine.