

Mayor and Council Offices

Mark Dion

Mayor

May 1, 2025



Testimony of Mayor of the City of Portland, Mark Dion

Before

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development

In Support of

LD 1681 An Act to Consider Municipal Shelter Facilities and Housing Projects Essential for Public Health, Welfare and Safety

May 1, 2025

Senator Curry, Representative Gere and esteemed members of the Joint Committee on Housing, thank you for the opportunity to testify today in support of *LD 1681 – An Act to Consider Municipal Shelter Facilities and Housing Projects Essential for Public Health, Welfare and Safety*. On behalf of the City of Portland, I wish to express our strong support for this bill.

Portland, like many Maine communities, continues to work hard to address the housing affordability crisis that is limiting our potential. As Maine’s largest city, we know that stable housing is the foundation of economic vitality, public safety, and strong neighborhoods. We have invested local resources, undertaken zoning reforms, and partnered with nonprofits and private developers to increase housing opportunities, but much more work is needed.

LD 1681 provides an important tool for accomplishing this work, by allowing municipalities to access low-cost financing through the Maine Municipal Bond Bank for shelter facilities and municipally managed housing projects. This bill does not call for new State spending; rather, it enables municipalities to use their own credit and capacity to invest wisely in projects that meet local needs.

By supporting the development of stable housing, municipalities reduce future costs — including emergency healthcare, public safety interventions, and economic displacement. Bonding for housing is an investment that strengthens the tax base, supports workforce development, and helps keep Mainers living and working in their own communities.

In Portland, we have recently created a Social Housing Task Force to explore new models of municipally led housing development. LD 1681 aligns perfectly with these efforts by giving cities like ours the flexibility to take proactive, self-funded steps to meet our housing challenges.

At a time when every tax dollar must be used carefully, allowing local governments to deploy their own resources efficiently is simply good fiscal stewardship. We respectfully urge the Committee to support LD 1681.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Dion", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark Dion
Mayor
City of Portland, Maine