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February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026

Joint Standing Committee Housing and Economic Development

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 2124 – An Act to Support Emergency Shelter Funding Using Revenue from the Real Estate Transfer Tax

Chair Chip Curry, Chair Traci Gere, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing & Economic Development

I am writing to you today in my capacity as Managing Director of MeCAP to express support for LD 2124, An Act to Support Emergency Shelter Funding Using Revenue from the Real Estate Transfer Tax.

While MeCAP takes no position on the choice of revenue source, we strongly support the desired result: a meaningful increase in stable, ongoing operating funds. Maine's emergency shelters are under unprecedented strain due to rising costs and significantly increased demand. These operational expenses determine whether shelters can keep their doors open, maintain adequate staffing, and safely serve individuals and families in crisis.

The shelter operating subsidy program, administered by the Maine State Housing Authority, is the backbone of Maine's homelessness response. It supports essential costs such as staff wages, utilities, maintenance, and service coordination. In the absence of dependable operating support, emergency shelters face cuts that ripple across entire communities and can cause additional strain on our healthcare systems, first responders, and municipal services.

LD 2124 strengthens Maine's emergency shelter system. Even a modest increase in operating subsidy funding provides stability that shelters can rely on as they manage fluctuating needs and costs. For these reasons, we respectfully ask you to support LD 2124 and continue to prioritize operational support for Maine's statewide shelter network.

Thank you for your thoughtful attention to this critical issue and for your unwavering dedication to ensuring that every Mainer can rely on safe, stable shelter when they need it most. We stand alongside the Maine State Housing Authority, a trusted partner and collaborator, in supporting this legislation and the vital investment it represents.

Thank you for your consideration,

*Victoria D. Forkus*

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