

State of Maine - 132nd Legislature
Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development
Testimony of Reilly Kons on behalf of Brunswick Downtown Association (Brunswick, Maine)
February 2nd, 2026

Supporting:
LD2124, "An Act to Support Emergency Shelter Funding Using Revenue from
the Real Estate Transfer Tax"

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

My name is Reilly Kons, I am testifying on behalf of myself and my community in support of this legislation. I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of LD2124, An Act to Support Emergency Shelter Funding Using Revenue from the Real Estate Transfer Tax.

The Brunswick Downtown Association works to strengthen the economic vitality and livability of downtown Brunswick. Homelessness directly affects this work, as downtown is often where people experiencing homelessness seek shelter, services, and connection. As a result, BDA staff, downtown businesses, and property owners regularly interact with individuals who are unhoused. While the BDA is not a service provider, we coordinate with local shelters and service organizations by sharing information, directing people to resources, and supporting compassionate responses in the downtown area when possible.

A stable and adequately funded shelter network is essential for organizations like mine to fulfill our core mission. When shelters are underfunded or forced to reduce capacity, the impacts ripple outward. People experiencing homelessness have fewer safe, dignified places to go, which increases strain on downtown spaces, small businesses, municipal services, and nonprofit organizations that are not equipped to provide emergency housing. If shelters close or become unreliable, downtown organizations are pulled further away from economic development, placemaking, and community-building work and into crisis response by necessity. Stable shelters allow service providers to do their jobs well, allow downtowns to function safely and compassionately, and allow organizations like the BDA to focus on strengthening our communities rather than managing the consequences of systemic gaps.

Please vote Ought to Pass on LD2124, so the Brunswick Downtown Association can focus on our mission and promote Downtown Brunswick and our community as a vibrant and attractive place to live, work, play and do business.

Thank you for your consideration.



Reilly Kons
Executive Director
Brunswick Downtown Association