

Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

In Opposition to

[LD 2164](#) *An Act to Assist Communities with Converting Vacant School Buildings into Housing*

February 10, 2026

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and distinguished members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee, my name is Tanya Emery, and I am providing testimony in opposition to LD 2164 at the direction of the Maine Municipal Association's (MMA) Legislative Policy Committee (LPC). Our LPC is composed of municipal officials from across Maine, elected by their peers to represent member communities. MMA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit member service organization that aims to help provide policy solutions that work for all residents of Maine.

The MMA LPC members appreciate the premise of the bill, which is to support communities going through school building conversions. However, members did express concern over the substantial fiscal note associated given that the Maine Redevelopment Land Bank (MRLB) already has the authority to work with communities on school conversions just like it can on myriad other types of properties. Maine municipalities are struggling with many types of functionally obsolete properties, and the LPC did not support limiting the proposed \$5 million allocation to just one type of redevelopment, rather than making it available where the need is greatest.

Importantly, if the committee considers this bill, the language should be amended to allow MRLB to aid school administrative units (SAUs) in addition to municipalities under this program. Municipalities often do not want to be the recipients of derelict properties, particularly those with significant environmental challenges, and do not want to take title. SAUs may end up retaining properties and working on redevelopment themselves. It is important that they are not cut out of this program if the bill were to pass.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter of community and economic resilience. I am happy to answer any questions you might have.

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