



**Written Testimony of Liza Fleming-Ives**

On behalf of the Genesis Fund  
Before the Joint Select Committee on Housing

In Support of LD2: An Act to End Chronic Homelessness by Creating the Housing First Fund

April 4, 2023

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing, my name is Liza Fleming-Ives. I am the Executive Director of the Genesis Community Loan Fund.

The Genesis Fund is a critical link and a proven guide in the development of affordable housing and community facilities in Maine. We're a nonprofit Community Development Financial Institution with a mission to bring together resources to create housing and other economic and social opportunities in communities across Maine. We have a 30-year track record of providing financing and technical assistance to nonprofit organizations and mission-oriented project developers throughout the state.

Affordable housing is a primary focus of our work and we urge you today to support LD2, a bill that would create site-based Housing First projects in Maine that will help end long-term, chronic homelessness in our state.

There are about 400 individuals in the state that experience chronic homelessness. Their needs are complex. Some have chronic mental illness, some struggle with substance use disorder, most have experienced significant trauma in their lives.

Housing First is a model of providing no-barrier housing along with on-site, 24/7 supportive services for people experiencing chronic homelessness. It has a proven track record of success both in Maine and in other parts of the country.

Key to the model are the services that help people maintain housing stability and LD2 will ensure that Housing First projects can be built in key areas of the state and that those services have a steady and consistent stream of funding.

This is a significant investment in the work of ending chronic homelessness in Maine. The Genesis Fund is committed to working with partners to support the development of Housing First projects in the places in Maine where they are needed most. I encourage you to pass LD2. Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.