

Testimony of the Maine Association of Public Housing Authority Directors

131st Legislature

Joint Select Committee on Housing

RE: LD 214, LD665, and LD1154

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing. The Maine Association of Public Housing Authority Directors membership consists of twenty local Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) across the state of Maine, with Public Housing Executive Directors from Sanford to Fort Fairfield. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **opposition to LD214, LD665, and LD1154.**

The enactment of PL 672 during the previous legislative session marked a significant turning point in addressing the pressing issue of Maine's ongoing housing crisis. This groundbreaking bipartisan bill sought to streamline bureaucracy and equip residential property owners with the necessary tools to tackle the state's affordable housing challenges. The legislation laid the groundwork for the development of more affordable housing options by permitting the construction of accessory dwelling units or duplexes on single-family properties.

Despite the headway made by PL 672, challenges persist in the form of bills such as LD214, LD665, and LD1154, which aim to decelerate the efforts to cut bureaucratic red tape and address Maine's housing crisis. These bills pose a threat to the opportunities created by PL672, undermining its potential benefits. It is essential to acknowledge that the scarcity of affordable housing impacts every individual in Maine and that concerted action is needed across all towns and communities.

LD214, in particular, seeks to restrict the application of the law to municipalities with populations exceeding 10,000, which encompasses a mere 4% of Maine's 483 municipalities. The support for PL 672 was far-reaching, with advocates from across the state, local and municipal elected officials, and the 130th legislature all endorsing this transformative policy. Although the passage of PL 672 was a significant accomplishment, the battle for affordable housing is far from over.

The dire consequences of the lack of affordable housing extend beyond the economy, impacting the health and well-being of Maine's residents. Numerous people face difficulties in securing safe and affordable housing, resulting in heightened stress, deteriorating health outcomes, and financial instability. It is of paramount importance that we persist in our efforts to guarantee that every individual in Maine has access to affordable housing. A just society must ensure that all its citizens have the opportunity to lead a dignified life, which includes access to safe and affordable housing. Failing to address this issue exacerbates social inequality and undermines the foundations of a fair and compassionate community.

We call upon the committee to oppose LD214, LD665, and LD1154, as their passage would constrain and postpone the much-needed solutions to Maine's housing crisis. By championing legislation that broadens housing options and resisting bills that hinder progress, we can effect significant and positive change in the lives of Maine's residents.

The importance of PL 672 to the state of Maine cannot be overstated. Its passage has been instrumental in initiating the process of reform and laying the foundation for future improvements in housing affordability. As a critical step in the right direction, it has provided a blueprint for continued progress.

In conclusion, while the enactment of PL 672 was an essential stride towards addressing Maine's housing crisis, there remains a substantial amount of work to be done. It is vital that we continue to move forward, taking decisive action to ensure that every person in Maine has access to secure, affordable housing. By supporting progressive legislation and standing against bills that impede growth, we can make a lasting and meaningful difference in the lives of Maine's residents.