

Jason Levesque - Auburn
Mark O'Brien - Augusta
Alan Casavant - Biddeford
Carl Sheline - Lewiston
Kate Snyder - Portland



MAINE MAYORS COALITION

Strengthening Our Cities & Our State

Louise MacLellan-Ruf - Rockland
William Doyle - Saco
Becky Brink - Sanford
Kate Lewis - South Portland
Michael Foley - Westbrook

Supported By: Mitchell Tardy Jackson Government Affairs - 104 Sewall Street, Augusta, Maine 04330 - 207-622-1365

**Maine Mayors Coalition
Testimony Neither For Nor Against LD 1540
An Act to Create the Stable Home Fund Program**

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere and distinguished members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing, the Maine Mayors Coalition submits testimony Neither For Nor Against LD 1540, An Act to Create the Stable Home Fund Program.

The Maine Mayors Coalition is a nonpartisan group representing the mayors of ten Maine communities – Auburn, Augusta, Biddeford, Lewiston, Portland, Rockland, Saco, Sanford, South Portland and Westbrook – and more than 260,000 residents. The Coalition advocates on behalf of our citizens and municipalities for policies that recognize the vital services Maine cities provide and the positive impact Maine cities have on our state. The Coalition seeks to work in partnership with state and federal elected officials to meet the needs of Maine people.

Maine's housing crisis directly impacts each of our cities, and housing is top of mind for all of us. Every day we see the human and economic consequences that come from the lack of housing supply and the rising costs of homes and rents.

Our cities are working to find ways we can help preserve existing affordable housing and develop new affordable housing. Both are critical for our cities – and our state – to thrive. In our capacity as mayors, we're engaging with community members and partners to foster ideas and advance solutions at the local level.

As you're well aware, the rental market, like the housing market, remains tight, making it difficult for many to afford our cities' rental units. We appreciate the funds allocated for rental payments in the current biennial budget as well as more recently in LD 3. The \$21 million from LD 3 provided many individuals and families with emergency rental relief during our cold winter months. With emergency rental assistance ending, many people will still not be able to pay their rents.

Establishing a rental assistance program to provide short term financial support would be helpful to many of our residents who must often make difficult decisions for themselves and their families. We would appreciate your consideration of a program, such as the one proposed in LD 1540, that would allow those who meet eligibility requirements to remain in their homes and avoid the daunting prospect of eviction and/or relocation.

We appreciate that, like us, you are faced with a multitude of funding requests and must make difficult decisions on behalf of Maine citizens. We thank you for the opportunity to provide this written testimony and for your continuing work on this very important issue.