

May 18, 2023

Honorable Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, members of the joint committee on housing,

I want to thank you for taking up LD 1867, An Act to Establish the Community Housing and Rural Development Authority. I want to urge the committee to support the measure.

Increasingly it's become very difficult for the working people of Maine to find and afford housing of any kind. I think some of the most effective tools we have of increasing the supply of affordable housing are local Housing Authorities- in Portland the PHA is aggressively pursuing updating and expanding its holdings, providing both affordable and lower end market rate housing.

Having such an authority able to operate in towns which don't have their own robust Public Housing Authorities would be a game changer. Using existing land Maine owns to create affordable housing, which would be permanently affordable, just makes sense.

Private development can only create luxury housing, as the cost of construction has simply gotten too high, unless it's heavily subsidized, to provide enough profit in the construction of affordable housing. If we want to balance the construction of Luxury housing with affordable housing for the working class, who we need so that they can support our continued existence with their labor, then we must begin building that housing ourselves.

This bill offers an excellent first step in that direction.

Thank you for taking it up, and I hope you all vote to advance it to the legislature for passage as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Winston Lumpkins IV,
Baker, Tenant,
Portland, Maine