



TOWN OF KITTERY

Office of the Town Manager

200 Rogers Road, Kittery, ME 03904

Telephone: 207-475-1329 Fax: 207-439-6806

kamaral@kitteryme.org | www.kitteryme.gov

January 23, 2024

Senator Pierce
Representative Gere
And
Honorable Members of the Housing Committee,

I am writing to respectfully request your support for LD2136 *An Act to Provide Financial Support for Shelter for Unhoused Individuals*. The Town of Kittery is part of the York County Committee on Homelessness, working to collaboratively develop and advance solutions that meet the collective needs of our unhoused and at-risk community members.

We are struggling to address homelessness and at-risk conditions in our region. We recognize that the ultimate resolution to the housing/homeless crisis will be a combination of solutions that include increased affordable housing generation and more comprehensive and supportive wrap-around services for those who struggle with housing stability. Kittery is working diligently to advance the generation of affordable housing units in our community through ordinance, community education, and innovative programs. However, we recognize these solutions are long time-horizon in nature. Therefore, we must pay equal attention to short-term solutions as well.

Kittery struggles with finding shelter for our clients that are homeless or in eminent danger of becoming homeless, are sleeping in their cars, tents, or other makeshift shelter throughout town. We rely too heavily on local hotels and motels in the area to serve as make-shift temporary shelters in the off-season. These placements are always fragile in nature and come with no beneficial wrap-around services to help the person or family get permanent housing placement and remain on a path to housing security. We are in an ever-looping cycle that does not adequately meet the needs of the community. We cannot continue to do the same thing and expect a different outcome.

We know that once a person or family is placed in appropriate shelter or housing, and provided with beneficial wrap-around services, they are resilient and can pursue a path of independent living, out of crisis and ending the ever-looping-cycle. That is why we need LD2136. LD2136 will provide critically needed support for

emergency shelters in York County, including for York County Shelters and Caring Unlimited. Their ability to be fully staffed and funded is vital to Kittery and to ensuring we do not have to send clients to another state to survive a winter night.

Kittery will continue to do its part on the long-term housing crisis. While we work on these longer-term challenges, I respectfully request your thoughtful consideration and support of LD2136; to ensure people are not left out in the cold today.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kendra', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Kendra Amaral
Town Manager

cc: York County Committee on Homelessness