

City of Portland | City Council
Mark Dion, *Mayor*



To: Joint Standing Committee on Housing
From: Portland City Council's Legislative Committee
Date: 1/30/2024
Re: LD 2136

Testimony in Support of LD 2136 An Act to Provide Financial Support for Shelters for Unhoused Individuals

Senator Pierce, Representative Gere and distinguished members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing:

On behalf of the Portland City Council's Legislative Committee, I write to you in support of LD 2136, An Act to Provide Financial Support for Shelters for Unhoused Individuals.

The shortage of housing and the escalating costs of homes and rents have led to severe consequences, including a rise in homelessness. This crisis encompasses families unable to afford rising rents, individuals grappling with mental health and substance use issues, and those seeking asylum in Maine, all in need of immediate shelter.

LD 2136 would increase the shelter operating subsidy in the general fund from \$2.5 million to \$12.5 million, and while this bill will not fix the issues of homelessness or housing affordability in our state, it will help to alleviate some of the burden on our shelters, who are struggling and require more financial resources to stay afloat.

Shelters play a critical role in solving homelessness and in keeping communities safe. The City of Portland's Legislative Committee urges the Committee to designate an increase in permanent state funding for shelters so that all these beds on the front line of this housing crisis remain available for the most vulnerable of our society.

Thank you for your consideration.

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