



3/25/24

RE: In support of Bill Number 2277: **Resolve, Authorizing the Commissioner of Administrative and Financial Services to Convey by Sale the Interests of the State in 3 Properties Located in Biddeford, Sanford, and York**

Esteemed Members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing;

I am Fiona McQuaide, serving as the Executive Director of York Housing in York, Maine. For more than three decades, we have been dedicated to the creation and management of affordable housing within the community. I wholeheartedly endorse this bill, as it offers a creative and thoughtful strategy to optimize the utilization of existing buildings while fostering the growth of affordable housing options.

I extend my gratitude to Governor Mills, and members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing for their unwavering dedication to tackling the issue of affordable housing scarcity. Furthermore, I appreciate the legislative efforts that have been enacted to promote the development of more affordable housing in Maine. The State of Maine Housing Production Needs Survey provided a comprehensive analysis of the housing landscape in Maine, highlighting the challenges that have led to decreased affordability and availability of homes. Factors such as a sudden influx of residents during the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic and a diminishing workforce due to aging populations have contributed to the housing shortage in Maine. To address the job vacancies resulting from increased retirements, Maine will need to attract workers from other states, demanding the creation of additional housing options. Moreover, there is a notable lack of affordable housing for low- and moderate-income households.

At York Housing, we have been fortunate to acquire properties at below-market rates, thanks to local property owners who sought to make a positive impact on the community by selling their properties to us. This has significantly bolstered the development of affordable housing units in York, ensuring long-term affordability. While the development of affordable housing has always been challenging, the post-pandemic surge in land and construction costs has posed significant obstacles, particularly in coastal communities in York County.

This legislation offers a remarkable chance to leverage current infrastructure for the advancement of cost-effective housing and related services, thereby promoting the construction of additional housing units to assist those in need, and aid in achieving the State's housing objectives. Thank you for allowing me to provide testimony in favor of this bill.

Respectfully,

Fiona McQuaide
Executive Director

