



MIDCOAST REGIONAL
HOUSING TRUST

Statement on LD 226 by Amy Hinkley on behalf of the Midcoast Regional Housing Trust, Rockland,
to the Joint Standing Committee on Housing

April 14, 2023

My name is Amy Hinkley, and I am a practicing architect and a former University of Maine Augusta Faculty member. My primary work centers on the development of durable and efficient building envelopes and sustainable construction methodologies. I am here today as a member of the board of the newly formed MidCoast Regional Housing Trust in Rockland. MCRHT's mission is to develop permanently affordable housing for working families in Knox County and the adjacent towns in Lincoln and Waldo Counties.

I'm here to voice our support of LD 226. While this bill provides much needed funding to help alleviate the affordable housing crisis in Maine, we need to ensure that it also address the problems of rural, coastal and island communities. Unlike larger jurisdictions, these communities are often served by small housing trusts and non-profit groups like MCRHT. Currently, at least ten of these groups operate in Maine with little state support. We're asking you to take a closer look at these organizations and dedicate part of the new resources in the proposed legislation to them.

In Knox County, the gap between qualifying for affordable housing and being able to afford housing in the current market is already huge. According to our needs assessment, In January 2022, the median price of a home in Knox County had reached \$370,000. Monthly rents in Rockland, if you are lucky

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enough to find an available rental, are approaching \$2000 for a two bedroom unit. In Knox, Lincoln, and Waldo County, even if you are making 120% of the area median income, you cannot afford to buy a house. There is simply not enough available affordable housing for sale or for rent to meet the needs of working families in our communities. We hope that some of the funds from LD 226 can be directed towards Housing Trusts and similar organizations in these rural areas; we are part of a many layered solution.

Healthy, efficient, durable, and affordable housing is critical infrastructure for our state's economy, and it is essential for keeping young people in our state. It is important to direct the funding for affordable housing not just to Maine's biggest cities, but also to the smaller towns and rural areas that are struggling with this crisis as well. With funding, Housing Trusts can play an essential role in developing workforce housing for these communities, where large developers are often absent. Thank you for recognizing the need, and for taking action with this legislation.

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