

# Maine Climate Action **NOW!**

To: Maine Legislature JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCIAL AFFAIRS; JOINT COMMITTEE ON HOUSING

From: Jess Falero, Maine Climate Action Now

Date: February 8, 2023

Re: LD 258: An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2023, June 30, 2024 and June 30, 2025 OUGHT TO PASS

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Committee on Housing, my name is Jess Falero. I am a resident of Portland and a Climate Justice Coordinator for Maine Climate Action Now, a statewide coalition of grassroots organizations who support transformative action in response to the climate and ecological emergency. We hold social, racial, and economic justice as critical to the transition to zero carbon emissions by 2030 and demand the equitable implementation of clean renewable energy, ecological land-use practices, and bold community-led action for a more resilient Maine.

The climate crisis is an issue that affects all communities differently in this state and it affects communities unequally. We recognize that many communities and groups may not have the resources to act on climate change, even if they recognize it as a threat. The unhoused and low income or asylum seeking residents are even more unable to react to the climate crisis as their basic need of shelter is either unmet or at risk.

Maine Climate Action Now is in full support of this budget that provides \$15M for the Rural Rental program for 5-18 unit rental properties in areas and at a size where traditional Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) projects are not generally feasible and \$15M for LIHTC projects that are often larger and in more urban areas. This powerful program will invest in building affordable housing for people in need throughout the state.

Too many Mainers are struggling to secure safe, affordable housing. This budget tackles the need for more affordable housing and services and can commit \$30 million in funding for affordable housing development in both rural and urban communities. This will go towards establishing long term investments urgently needed to address Mainers' lack of affordable housing.

As someone who has personally experienced being chronically unhoused, I know first hand the urgency that is the housing crisis. At a time when our poor and unhoused community has

# Maine Climate Action **NOW!**

suffered an unmentionable amount of loss from overdose deaths, suicides or homicides, our poor and unhoused communities deserve the people in power to act on the urgency that we've known and felt for years.

We saw the need when the entire world was asked to quarantine inside their home. We saw the need when hundreds of unhoused people camped on the steps of Portland City Hall during July of 2020. We saw the need this past weekend when arctic temps were upon us and there was a rush to open warming shelters to keep our unhoused community from freezing to death.

The time for long term solutions to address the housing crisis is long overdue. For the urgency to solve the climate crisis, the overdose crisis, the housing crisis can only begin with this first step. The creation of affordable housing. We urge you to vote OUGHT TO PASS.

Jess Falero  
Maine Climate Action Now  
LD 258

Senator Rotundo, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs; Senator Pierce, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Committee on Housing, my name is Jess Falero. I am a resident of Portland and a Climate Justice Coordinator for Maine Climate Action Now, a statewide coalition of grassroots organizations who support transformative action in response to the climate and ecological emergency. We hold social, racial, and economic justice as critical to the transition to zero carbon emissions by 2030 and demand the equitable implementation of clean renewable energy, ecological land-use practices, and bold community-led action for a more resilient Maine.

The climate crisis is an issue that affects all communities differently in this state and it affects communities unequally. We recognize that many communities and groups may not have the resources to act on climate change, even if they recognize it as a threat. The unhoused and low income or asylum seeking residents are even more unable to react to the climate crisis as their basic need of shelter is either unmet or at risk.

Maine Climate Action Now is in full support of this budget that provides \$15M for the Rural Rental program for 5-18 unit rental properties in areas and at a size where traditional Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) projects are not generally feasible and \$15M for LIHTC projects that are often larger and in more urban areas. This powerful program will invest in building affordable housing for people in need throughout the state.

Too many Mainers are struggling to secure safe, affordable housing. This budget tackles the need for more affordable housing and services and can commit \$30 million in funding for affordable housing development in both rural and urban communities. This will go towards establishing long term investments urgently needed to address Mainers' lack of affordable housing.

As someone who has personally experienced being chronically unhoused, I know first hand the urgency that is the housing crisis. At a time when our poor and unhoused community has suffered an unmentionable amount of loss from overdose deaths, suicides or homicides, our poor and unhoused communities deserve the people in power to act on the urgency that we've known and felt for years.

We saw the need when the entire world was asked to quarantine inside their home. We saw the need when hundreds of unhoused people camped on the steps of Portland City Hall during July of 2020. We saw the need this past weekend when arctic temps were upon us and there was a rush to open warming shelters to keep our unhoused community from freezing to death.

The time for long term solutions to address the housing crisis is long overdue. For the urgency to solve the climate crisis, the overdose crisis, the housing crisis can only begin with this first step. The creation of affordable housing. We urge you to vote OUGHT TO PASS.