

# Bringing Home The Bacon

## **MaineHousing**

Legislative Advocacy: State Advocacy

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## Bringing Home the Bacon

In the 131<sup>st</sup> Maine Legislature, MaineHousing, along with its allies and partners, secured a record \$146 million in state funding aimed at significantly improving affordable housing opportunities in Maine. This reflected a confluence of interests: a Governor who has sustained her focus on housing more than any of her predecessors; growing legislative urgency that culminated in the establishment of a joint select legislative committee focused solely on housing; and MaineHousing itself: a quasi-governmental state HFA that has earned a reputation as an effective, efficient, non-partisan partner for state government.

Though this proposal for an NCSHA award for advocacy emphasizes the specific legislative successes of 2023 and 2024, those current accomplishments grow out of a three-way partnership that started strong and has grown stronger over the past six years. Since Governor Mills took office in 2019, the administration and legislature have allocated more than \$285 million to housing, an unprecedented level of investment in this state of just 1.3 million people.

Less than a month ago, a new tranche of \$76 million, a full 22 percent of the state’s 2024 supplemental budget, is on its way to help more Maine people secure the housing they deserve and need. Some of these funds will leverage federal resources, while others are designated to help new developers in simpler non-LIHTC projects, and still others were provided to be flexible, allocated to be used as needed to meet housing emergencies, and to preserve mobile home parks, which are currently being purchased by out of state investors.

Receiving this large a slice of the state’s budget is remarkable for an entity that sits outside of state government, yet we see it as the result of working hand-in-hand with both the Executive and Legislative branches to effectively help the people of Maine. To receive funds that are only loosely structured is a mark of trust in our agency, which takes the responsibility of allocating them extremely seriously. We will work closely with the administration in making sure that they are used as the legislature intended.

In addition, to securing these precious public resources for housing and housing-related support, MaineHousing’s team is seen as a key influencer on new housing law and policy changes, many that may not carry a direct price tag, but that are now rapidly reshaping the state’s housing landscape for the better and for the long haul.

In the 2021 National Council of State Housing Agencies Awards for Excellence contest, we highlighted for our colleagues our strategy to play the “Long Game” on housing advocacy at the Legislature. In that entry we noted how MaineHousing had successfully secured a new state low-income housing tax credit program that would appropriate \$80 million of state funding over an eight-year period. We noted the initial proposal was for \$80 million over *four* years, but because we understood the long game we were not disappointed with that dilution. MaineHousing didn’t lament not getting all we wanted at once, instead we saw --and celebrated-- progress. We didn’t alienate our critics and adversaries, but instead took a Maine, lead-by-example, “dirigo” approach, and put those state tax credits to work building affordable housing. Through the pandemic years we built trust with success.

MaineHousing continues to see its advocacy work not as single stop, not a mountain summit to reach and conquer, but as an ongoing effort to continually increase the resources we can bring to bear in solving Maine’s most daunting housing problems. When we are given the tools we have asked for, we use them quickly and

effectively.

We also embrace the notion, that no idea is a bad idea. All suggestions bubbling up from fellow housing advocates, lawmakers, and the public are given careful consideration – there are no non-starter ideas –nothing dismissed out of hand. For example when legislation was proposed that would have created a new program to compete with one of our existing programs, we were able to work with the sponsor before the hearing to modify the bill to provide additional capital to the existing program. This, in turn provided momentum to show the Governor’s office that there was depth of interest in provide funding for the program, helping convince her to include it in her budget. Working with legislators and their aides is a retail process, building relationships and trust.

Bragging about bringing home the bacon for achieving record levels of non-federal housing support is one thing, but equally important is the work done on the other hand. That work prevents poor policy decisions from being enacted. The work done to ensure the public narrative around housing and housing-related issues creates common ground and productive spaces for those with vastly diverging political views to come together and agree on something.

Misguided or flawed policies have been averted by leaning in and listening carefully. Outreach to the press and public has been proactive, aimed at getting ahead of narrative by being responsive and quickly accountable. This approach pays additional credibility and trust dividends – all this gives deeper meaning to the word “authority” in our name.

This record level of state funding is the result of a multi-year effort and it reflects an unparalleled level of trust being placed in an agency that sits outside of state government. That well-earned trust, coupled with a legislative-advocacy strategy based in responsiveness and relationship building has additionally positioned MaineHousing to be the state media’s sought-after source for all things housing. We are the established experts for our friends in the Legislature and our colleagues in the media. We intend not to squander that trust and respect.

While the biggest result of this collaboration has been the allotment of an unprecedented \$285 million in subsidy for construction, some of the policy accomplishments of this collaborative relationship during the current legislature have

**Developing a permanent source of funding to support “housing first” projects:**

Maine has a small but persistent population of chronically homeless individuals. Our state has seen great success with three “housing first” apartment buildings, but the greatest barrier to creating more of this “best practice” form of housing has not been creating the units, but paying for the accompanying services long term. This past session, the legislature, with the encouragement of the administration, designated a set percentage of the Real Estate Transfer tax to go into a special fund restricted to housing first work. At first, all of this revenue stream will be directed to support construction, but as new buildings come on line, an increasing percentage of the revenue will be used to provide social services within the new buildings. Eventually all of the revenue will be used for services.

It’s always challenging for the legislature to create programs with long-term budgetary impact. This revenue shift was a policy that would likely not have been possible without support from both the Executive branch and legislative leadership. Mainehousing was involved in all aspects of the program’s design and subsequent journey through the legislature.

### **Developing a Home Share pilot program for older residents:**

As the state with the oldest population in the country, Maine has many residents who own homes but who may have extra space and need extra income. Intergenerational homesharing is one innovative solution that has the potential to unlock hundreds of new units of affordable housing in a relatively short period of time without requiring any money to be spent on new construction. As the result of legislative action, MaineHousing has contracted with Nesterly, a social enterprise that specializes in this practice.

Mainehousing is working to implement this legislative priority, but every step of the way it has enjoyed close collaboration with the Governor's cabinet on aging, as well as a number of statewide nonprofits devoted to older Mainers.

### **Raising the Moral Obligation Limit:**

MaineHousing sells its bonds under the state's moral obligation. This means that in the event of a default the state has a moral (but not a legal) obligation to provide support. After more than 20 years, MaineHousing needed to raise that limit, and had legislation submitted, taking the moral obligation limit from \$2.15 billion to \$3 billion. The challenge with a bill like this is that it's a highly nuanced issue with a huge number connected. This is the sort of bill that's easy to vote against, simply because to a casual legislator it's hard to differentiate between an obligation limit and an actual appropriation. In addition, it's something that if not successful, would cause MaineHousing's lending operations to come to a grinding halt.

Thanks to steady advocacy with the governor's office, the support of the State Treasurer, and a campaign of retail education with key legislators and party caucuses on both the Housing and Appropriations committees, this bill passed with unanimous support out of the Housing committee. This meant that it passed the House and Senate without need for debate. It was released from the Senate Appropriations Table on a Thursday morning, and that same afternoon it was signed into law by the Governor. This record pace through the chambers was a testament to both the working relationships all parties have established, and the trust that has developed among them.

### **HAF Rescue:**

Like all states, Maine received significant funding from the Federal government for pandemic relief housing programs. MaineHousing managed Maine's Emergency Rental Assistance program, while the State government was operating the sister program, the Homeowner Assistance Fund. A year later, the ERA program was almost fully expended, while the HAF was having serious problems launching.

At the request of the Governor's office, MaineHousing stepped in to assume management of the HAF program last year. Our agency worked with the administration to modify the program, make it available to partner agencies in different parts of the state, and streamline the application and approval processes. Now, just a year later, the program has closed, having served nearly 3,000 households.

This seamless transfer of the program would not have been possible in the absence of the relationship and trust between the executive branch and MaineHousing.

## Appendix A

### Visual Aids

Jamie Johnson, Adam Krea and Erik Jorgensen all of MaineHousing pose with Governor Janet Mills for the bill's signing.



## Appendix B

### Key Housing Highlights Achieved in the Maine Legislature in 2023-2024.

- Moral obligation bond cap hiked to \$3 billion!
- Housing First law! Provides dedicated state funding for supportive housing development with a conversion to funding going towards services after construction financing.
- More \$150 million in state funding sent to MaineHousing over the two-year Legislative period.
- Circa Pilot Program legislation. Funds and creates pilot program to allow subsidized housing tenants to count their rent payments on their credit reports.
- Nesterly Pilot Program legislation. Funds and creates a pilot home sharing platform aimed at matching homeowners with spare rooms with suitable housemates.
- Creation of the Emergency Housing Relief Fund. This new fund and new funding has been instrumental in establishing more than 70 different programs aimed at combating homelessness on a variety of levels, with a focus on relieving the pressure on the homeless response system that was created by the arrival of thousands of asylum-seeking immigrants in 2022 and 2023.
- Rural Affordable Rental Housing Program. This new state financed subsidy program was started with federal American Rescue Plan Act funding but was so successful it was refunded with two separate appropriations from state government. The first for \$10 million and the second for \$20 million.
- Affordable Homeownership Program. This new state-financed subsidy program was also started with \$10 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding but was subsequently refunded with a \$10 million appropriation from state government in 2024.
- Assylum Seeker housing and household support
- HAF program rescue!

## Appendix C

**MAINEHOUSING LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY - 131<sup>st</sup> Legislature 2023 First Session and First Special Session**



**MAINEHOUSING LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY**  
 131<sup>st</sup> Legislature 2023 First Session and First Special Session

The Maine legislature concluded its first session business (a regular and a special session) and adjourned during the evening of July 25, 2023. This was, by any measure, the most consequential legislative session for housing ever, and the issues were driven by a desire among legislators to respond to the deep housing shortages in Maine and across the nation. For the first time, Maine had a designated legislative committee devoted to housing. This committee, which from the start adopted a largely non-partisan stance, received 58 bill referrals that tended to fall across 4 categories: direct support for housing production; supports for people experiencing homelessness and in need of emergency housing; zoning and land use initiatives; and proposals for tenant support and protection.

Bill provisions that specifically require action of MSHA are shown in bold. Bills passed and in law are shown in green (including laws absorbed into the governors change package), bills carried over to the next regular legislative session are shown in yellow, and bills that died during this session are shown in grey. MSHA positions, where we had a position, were “supported”, “opposed” and “NFNA” (Neither For Nor Against).

If you are viewing this document electronically, the LD numbers shown in the leftmost column are linked to the legislature’s bill tracking system, which provides broader information, bill status, and testimony.

LD	TITLE - AN ACT TO	CHIEF SPONSOR	STATUS
<a href="#">2</a>	Address Chronic Homelessness by Creating the Housing First Fund	Talbot-Ross	ABSORBED IN BUDGET

This Bill was absorbed into Governor Mills’ Change Package. It establishes the Housing First Program, which funds the construction and operation of Housing First projects for persons experiencing chronic homelessness. It is funded by an allocation from the real estate transfer tax, which means it won’t be subject to future budget negotiations and cuts. **This bill requires DHHS and MSHA to jointly administer the program and report annually to the housing committee.**

MSHA POSITION: supported.

3	Establish the Winter Energy Relief Payment Program to Aid Residents with High Heating Costs and to Finalize the COVID Pandemic Relief Payment Program”	Talbot-Ross	IN LAW
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This was an emergency bill that provided a one-time transfer of \$71,000,000 to provide relief to eligible Maine households to assist with high heating costs this past winter. Funding came in the form of \$40,000,000 for LIHEAP; \$10,000,000 for emergency heating assistance (ECIP); \$21,000,000 for short and long-term emergency housing.

MSHA POSITION: supported.

<a href="#">11</a>	Strengthen Temp Protections for Children Living in Dwellings with Identified Lead Hazards	Cloutier	IN LAW
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This bill empowers DHHS to order landlords to conduct lead abatement or temporary controls in units with children. Landlords are also responsible for relocating tenants to another unit until lead hazards are abated.

MSHA POSITION: followed but did not take a position, as it is a DHHS bill.

<a href="#">27</a>	Align Maine's Lead Abatement Law with Federal Definitions and to Clarify Lead Abatement Licensing and Certification Requirements	Pouliot	IN LAW
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This law changes the exemptions to lead abatement standards to be consistent with Federal laws. Unfinished basements and areas sealed off from occupants are no longer excluded from classification as a “residential dwelling,” and are therefore subject to lead hazard protection laws. Furthermore, this law clarifies that anywhere children under 6 are expected to reside or even visit is subject to lead laws.

MSHA POSITION: followed but did not take a position.

<a href="#">144</a>	Regarding the Monitoring of Municipal Abandoned Property	Sachs	IN LAW
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This was a technical bill to improve the process of monitoring abandoned property. Municipalities will now report abandoned properties to the Maine Redevelopment Land Bank Authority instead of the Maine State Housing Authority.

MSHA POSITION: supported.

<a href="#">184</a>	Provide for the 2023 and 2024 Allocations of the State Ceiling on Private Activity Bonds	Daughtry	IN LAW
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This is an annual bill whose passage is necessary for MaineHousing and other bonding agencies to issue tax exempt bonds. The bill sets allocations within Maine's bond cap for authorizing entities in Maine to sell private activity bonds for the coming year. It is routine but important.

MSHA POSITION: supported.

<a href="#">207</a>	Transfer Responsibility for Administering the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code from the Department of Public Safety, Office of the State Fire Marshal to the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation	Morris	IN LAW
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This bill mandates that a stakeholder group convene to examine the responsibilities of the Technical Building Codes and Standards Board. It will include representatives from many different public and private stakeholder groups, and examine the cost, enforcement, timeline, and administration of new building codes, then present recommendations to the legislature. **This bill requires that the director of MSHA or his designee participate in the stakeholder group.**

MSHA POSITION: followed but did not take a position.

<a href="#">214</a>	Amend the Laws Regarding Zoning and Land Use Restrictions to Limit Certain Requirements to Municipalities with a Population of More than 10,000	Campbell	DEAD
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This bill died in the housing committee. It was meant to change zoning laws to exclude small towns from the land-use requirements of LD 2003

MSHA POSITION: followed but did not take a position.

<a href="#">226</a>	To Address Maine's Affordable Housing Crisis	Millett	CARRIED OVER
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This bill originally called for \$200,000,000 support housing through subsidy. It was amended to include an ongoing finding mechanism from the liquor tax, which was not adopted. Subsidy was ultimately included in the State budget, providing \$35,000,000 annually for 2 years (\$70,000,000 total) to support the small rural and 4% programs. **So, while provisions of this bill were adopted, the bill itself has been carried over to 2024.**

MSHA POSITION: supported.

<a href="#">238</a>	Resolve, Regarding Mortgage Assistance for Persons with Illnesses Related to COVID-19 (formerly Create a Program for Mortgage Assistance for Persons with Illnesses Related to COVID-19)	Griffin	IN LAW
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This bill was motivated by a constituent who had run into problems with the HAF program as run by the state. It originally set out to create a state-funded Homeowner Assistance Fund (HAF). It was eventually amended to a resolve, **requiring MSHA to continue running the federal HAF program (which we are doing), and included a provision requiring MSHA to submit a program progress report by February 1 2024 to the Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business.**

MSHA POSITION: we were opposed to LD 238 due to our already administering HAF program, but were OK with providing a report.

<a href="#">258</a>	STATE BUDGET: 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	Sachs/Rotundo (Governor's bill)	IN LAW
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This is the initial state budget, which was passed by majority vote in April. It funded only baseline government activity, leaving expansion and new activities to be included in the subsequent supplemental budget (Change Package). This bill covered only the “routine” funding provided by the state: It covers the HOME Fund account, the LIAP Account, the MEHER bond program, the state portion of the Shelter Operating Subsidy. It also initially included \$30,000,000 (Part TT) for housing subsidy but this was struck when the bill passed as a majority budget, and was instead included in the Change Package

MSHA POSITION: supported.

<a href="#">314</a>	Establish the Permanent Commission on the Status of Housing in Maine	Hickman	CARRIED OVER
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This bill would establish the permanent Commission on the Status of Housing in Maine to identify hurdles to developing more affordable housing and recommend solutions.

MSHA POSITION: followed but did not take a position.

<a href="#">337</a>	Amend the Regulations of Manufactured Housing to Increase Affordable Housing	Golek	CARRIED OVER
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So far, this bill remains a concept draft aiming to amend regulations on manufactured housing to increase affordable housing. Details currently unknown.

MSHA POSITION: followed but did not take a position.

<a href="#">383</a>	Restore Legislative Oversight of Rulemaking	Andrews	DEAD
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This was a bill attempting to make all rules “major substantive rules,” subjecting them to legislative approval. MSHA testified in opposition because we felt this would result in a colossal increase in bureaucracy and create a huge bottleneck in the legislature.

MSHA POSITION: opposed.

<a href="#">387</a>	Promote Affordable Housing by Providing a Tax Exemption for Housing Choice Vouchers	Blier	CARRIED OVER
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This is another concept bill that would create an income tax deduction for income received by a landlord from tenants with Section 8 housing choice vouchers.

MSHA POSITION: followed but did not take a position.

<a href="#">462</a>	Assist Persons Experiencing Homelessness in Areas of High Rent by Seeking a Waiver from the Federal Government	Madigan	DEAD
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This bill was killed. It would have required MSHA to seek a waiver in areas where actual fair market rent exceeds fair market rent as calculated by HUD. This waiver would permit additional funds to cover the cost of actual fair market rent specifically for persons experiencing homelessness. MSHA had several concerns. First, this bill dealt directly with MSHA, despite the fact that we only issue about 1/3 of Maine’s vouchers and have no jurisdiction to seek waivers on behalf of vouchers issued by PHAs. Secondly, HUD does not have any system to provide temporary waivers for its FMR rates. Finally, it is important to note that successfully increasing the value of a voucher does not bring any additional funding from HUD. This means that funding each voucher at a higher level would reduce the number of total vouchers a PHA could issue.

MSHA POSITION: opposed.

<a href="#">470</a>	Support Lead Abatement in Older Residential Properties	Cloutier	FUNDED OFF TABLE
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This bill was partially funded in the Change Package. It proposed to fund MSHA \$1,000,000, each year for the next three years to support lead abatement. At the end of the process it was amended to provide a one-time allocation of \$375,000 to continue the lead abatement program, which is better than nothing, but far lower than what is needed. We are seeking to have this funding increased through a supplemental budget request.

MSHA POSITION: supported.

<a href="#">490</a>	Designate the Department of Health and Human Services as the Implementing Department of the Lead-safe Housing Registry	Craven	IN LAW
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This bill transferred the responsibility for maintaining the Lead-safe Housing Registry from the Department of Environmental Protections to the Department of Health and Human Services.

MSHA POSITION: followed but did not take a position.

<a href="#">524</a>	Requiring the Installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Stations in New Commercial and Multifamily Parking Lot Construction	Runte	DEAD
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This bill died between houses. It would have required all new construction, with some exceptions, to have some portion of parking spaces wired for electric vehicle charging. We were concerned about unintended consequences and costs, as the bill would have required all new multifamily housing of more than 5 units have at least 15% of parking spaces wired for electric vehicle charging.

MSHA POSITION: NFNA, and urged committee to adopt rules parallel to our EV & PV policies, which require conduit and electrical boxes sized to accommodate EV chargers and PV panels, but not the chargers or panel themselves.

<a href="#">554</a>	Continue the Rural Affordable Rental Housing Program	Shagoury	DEAD
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This bill sought to provide \$10,000,000 to the Rural Affordable Rental Housing Program through the MSHA. Funding for that program was included in the Governor's Change package, so while the bill died, its intent was recognized.

MSHA POSITION: supported.

<a href="#">611</a>	Resolve, Establishing a Working Group to Maximize Eligibility for Energy Efficiency Programs for Low-income Homeowners, formerly An Act to Create the Whole Home Repairs Program	Malon	IN LAW
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This bill began as an attempt to add funding to the weatherization readiness program. It was modified into a resolve requiring **MSHA to create a working group to design a program providing assistance to low-income homeowners for weatherization and repairs needed to meet eligibility for home energy assistance programs. MSHA working group must then report to Housing Committee with program proposal by December 1<sup>st</sup> 2023.**

MSHA POSITION: supported.

<a href="#">638</a>	Directing the Maine State Housing Authority to Study Strategies for Improving Abandoned Properties and Developing Housing Infrastructure	Malon	DEAD
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This bill died, it would have required MSHA to study strategies for improving abandoned properties and creating incentives for land improvements.

MSHA POSITION: followed but did not take a position.

<a href="#">665</a>	Extend the Date by Which Compliance is Required for Affordable Housing Development, Increased Numbers of Dwelling Units and Accessory Dwelling Units	Hepler	DEAD
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This was another bill seeking to modify the terms of LD 2003. It would have postponed, until 2025, the requirement that accessory dwelling units in new affordable housing developments have the same setback requirements as single-family homes. LD 1706, which passed, deals with a similar zoning issue.

MSHA POSITION: followed but did not take a position.

<a href="#">705</a>	Concerning the Housing Opportunities for Maine Fund and Expenditures by the Maine State Housing Authority	Lookner	DEAD
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This bill died as a concept. It would have reviewed the Housing Opportunities for Maine Fund.

MSHA POSITION: followed but did not take a position.

<a href="#">709</a>	Support Home Share Programming for Seniors	O'Neil	FUNDED BY MSHA
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This bill passed, and was funded by MSHA off the table. **It requires MSHA to develop and administer a home share pilot program to match older persons who own homes with adults who need affordable housing. This bill also requires MSHA to develop and solicit proposals, award a contract and submit a report to the legislature showing how the original program went.**

MSHA POSITION: supported.

<a href="#">721</a>	Preserve Historic Buildings and Promote Affordable Housing	Daughtry	CARRIED OVER
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This bill would have enacted laws to protect historic buildings and promote affordable housing. This is a concept draft, we have no further details at this time.

MSHA POSITION: followed but did not take a position.

<a href="#">724</a>	Expand Workforce Housing in Rural Maine by Funding the Maine State Housing Authority's Rural Affordable Rental Housing Program	Reny	IN LAW
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This measure started life as a bill to support the Rural Affordable Program. It is now a general purpose housing cleanup bill. It clarifies a previous law, ensuring that MSHA and municipal housing authorities have the first option to purchase low-income rental housing that could lose its affordability: owners of low-income rental housing must provide notice of an intent to sell their property and allow MSHA and/or municipal housing authorities time to explore purchasing the property. It also authorizes this purchase option to a nonprofit organization.

This law also removed a statutory cap on the amount of outstanding principal on construction loan bonds held by MSA, and made a tweak to the growth management law.

MSHA POSITION: supported.

<a href="#">774</a>	Require the Maine State Housing Authority to Report to the Legislature on the Housing Opportunities for Maine Fund	Pouliot	IN LAW
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**This bill requires MSHA to submit an annual report to the housing committee identifying the sources and uses of the Housing Opportunities for Maine fund.** We already submit a biennial report; this bill made that report annual.

MSHA POSITION: NFNA.

<a href="#">801</a>	Require Municipalities to Obtain Housing Units for Residents Experiencing Homelessness	Perry	DEAD
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This bill died. It would have required municipalities to maintain at least 1 housing unit for every 1,000 residents for persons experiencing homelessness.

MSHA POSITION: followed but did not take a position.

<a href="#">815</a>	Provide Energy Efficiency Program Outreach and Assistance to Manufactured Housing Residents	Golek	IN LAW
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This bill focused on the Efficiency Maine Trust. **The trust, in coordination with MSHA, will provide an education and outreach program to inform low and moderate-income residents of manufactured housing about the energy efficiency programs offered by MSHA. MSHA will ensure energy efficiency programs (grants for weatherization and heat pumps) are offered to residents of manufactured housing.**

MSHA POSITION: supported.

<a href="#">853</a>	RESOLUTION, Proposing an Amendment to the Constitution of Maine to Establish a Right to Housing	Collings	CARRIED OVER
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This bill proposed an amendment to the Constitution of Maine to declare that individuals have an inalienable right to housing. We are not clear on the practical implications of what such an amendment would mean.

MSHA POSITION: followed but did not take a position.

<a href="#">885</a>	Help First-time Home Buyers in Maine	Skold	DEAD
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This bill died in its early concept phase. It would have modified MSHA's First Home Loan Program by increasing the cash down payment assistance grants, adding a "buy down" option to further lower the mortgage rate, and allowing rent payments to bolster lower credit scores. MSHA had concerns that these changes would not have worked and that while we would welcome more funds for homeownership, these changes were probably not the top priority.

MSHA POSITION: NFNA but more opposed.

<a href="#">1074</a>	Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Fund New Affordable Housing for Low-income Households	Daughtry	CARRIED OVER
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This bill proposed a bond issue of \$100,000,000 to build or rehabilitate affordable housing for low-income households. No general obligation bond bills were passed this session—all were carried over.

MSHA POSITION: followed – we will support.

<a href="#">1101</a>	Support Lower Home Energy Costs by Establishing a Home Energy Scoring System	Millett	IN LAW
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**This bill requires that the Efficiency Maine Trust, in conjunction with MSHA establish a home energy scoring system to evaluate a building’s energy efficiency.** EMT will maintain a database of these scores. The trust and the Maine State Housing Authority shall prepare suggested energy efficiency standards for landlords and other lessors of residential rental property that is used by a tenant or lessee as a primary residence.

MSHA POSITION: followed but did not take a position.

<a href="#">1107</a>	Establish a Pilot Project to Improve Access to Credit for Low-income Individuals	Zager	FUNDED OFF TABLE
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This bill creates a pilot project to collect and report tenant rent payment histories to credit reporting agencies. This way, renters can build their credit by making payments on time. The program was funded off the table with some settlement funding from the Attorney General’s office. **It requires that MSHA solicit contractors, run the pilot program, and submit a report on the pilot project to the legislature.**

MSHA POSITION: supported.

<a href="#">1116</a>	Provide Rural Recovery Residences for Families (formerly Provide Rural Sober Living Housing for Mothers)	Supica	ABSORBED IN BUDGET
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This was absorbed into the Change Package. As amended, this bill provided a one-time allocation of \$1,500,000 for the creation of rural sober living houses. When added to the change package the intent was for this bill to augment a proposed federal earmark from Senator Collins.

MSHA POSITION: followed but did not take a position.

<a href="#">1177</a>	Assess a Slip Fee on Megayachts Registered in Overseas Tax Havens	Lookner	CARRIED OVER
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This bill would require that megayachts to pay an “impact fee” for up to 30 days. The fee is \$10 per foot of length over 150 feet. The municipality retains 10% of the fee; the rest are deposited into the Megayacht Fund, half of which would support harbor infrastructure, and the other half will support public transit infrastructure. This was originally drafted as a fund to support affordable housing development, but that purpose was amended out of the bill by the committee.

MSHA POSITION: NFNA.

<a href="#">1193</a>	Allow Residents of Low-income Housing to Keep Pets	Chipman	DEAD
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This bill would have directed MSHA and municipal housing authorities to allow residents of public housing to own household pets. Most subsidized housing already follows HUD's pet policies. There are some properties where pets are permitted and others where they are not. MSHA did not support a blanket permission to allow pets. We were very concerned about the complexity of this legislation in terms of how it would harmonize with HUD rules; we also had concerns about the establishment of more landlord mandates.

MSHA POSITION: NFNA.

<a href="#">1282</a>	Streamline Income Verification Requests for Income Supplementation & Assistance Programs	Daughtry	CARRIED OVER
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This is the latest in a series of efforts to reform information sharing between DHHS and other programs. Personally Identifiable Information protections can make sharing information between government agencies difficult. This bill directs the Department of Health and Human Services to provide income records and program enrollment information when requested for the purpose of administering any local, state, or federal subsidized housing program or energy assistance program.

MSHA POSITION: supported.

<a href="#">1293</a>	End Chronic Homelessness by Creating the Housing First Fund	Gattine	DEAD
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This bill set out to create a designated fund to support the creation of housing first based multifamily projects. It was ultimately the basis for LD 2, thereby making this particular bill unnecessary

MSHA POSITION: Supported

<a href="#">1422</a>	End Homelessness and Assist Students Who Are Homeless by Establishing a Rental Subsidy Program (formerly titled Housing Voucher Program and Providing Site-based Housing Services)	Brennan	CARRIED OVER
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This bill would have required MSHA to create a housing choice voucher program for homeless students and their families. It passed but ended up not being funded and so was carried over on the special table.

MSHA POSITION: supported

<a href="#">1505</a>	Amend the Maine Cooperative Affordable Housing Ownership Act	Cloutier	CARRIED OVER
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This bill would amend the Maine Cooperative Affordable Housing Ownership Act to include “group equity cooperatives.” These are like any other housing cooperative, but have additional restrictions to ensure they uphold public purpose, and they are often low-equity entities where residents can purchase shares for a nominal amount and participate in management. MaineHousing worked with the bill’s sponsor to assure that language was workable. A central question around low-equity cooperatives: are the residents tenants or owners?

MSHA POSITION: Probably will support

<a href="#">1514</a>	Provide Safe, Short-term Housing to Individuals Recently Released from Correctional Facilities	Talbot-Ross	CARRIED OVER
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This bill directs the department of corrections to create and administer a program that provides transitional housing for 2 months for individuals released from correctional facilities. It would also require MSHA to study long-term solutions for this demographic.

MSHA POSITION: Not Determined

<a href="#">1540</a>	Resolve, to Establish an Eviction Prevention Pilot Program (formerly Create the Stable Home Fund Program)	Millett	CARRIED OVER
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This bill creates a pilot program to prevent eviction through rental assistance. It is meant to assist low-income people not receiving a housing voucher. The program would provide direct payments of up to \$300 per month to landlords for up to 24 months. It would require MSHA to delegate or administer the program.

MSHA POSITION: NFNA

<a href="#">1673</a>	Encourage Affordable Housing and Mixed-use Development by Establishing a Thriving Corridors Program	Gere	CARRIED OVER
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This bill is supported by “smart growth” advocates and establishes the Thriving Corridors program, which helps municipalities redevelop roads near downtowns and village centers into mixed-use, walkable neighborhoods. This bill would require that MSHA prioritize funding for mixed-use projects in designated corridors (we are not clear about what that would require). It also enlists the help and resources of The Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future, as well as the Maine Department of Transportation.

MSHA POSITION: Need to discuss with sponsor about issue of prioritization.

<a href="#">1706</a>	Clarify Statewide Laws Regarding Affordable Housing and Accessory Dwelling Units	Malon	IN LAW
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This bill prohibits municipalities from passing ordinances that impose dimensional or setback requirements stricter than what already exists. It also permits accessory dwelling units on nonconforming lots, as long as units don't worsen nonconformity—this includes shore land, as long as accessory dwelling units meet requirements established by the Department of Environmental Protection. The bill also postpones the implementation of these laws until July 1, 2024.

MSHA POSITION: Did not take a position

<a href="#">1710</a>	Establish the Maine Rental Assistance and Guarantee Program and Amend the Laws Regarding Tenants and the Municipal General Assistance Program	Golek	CARRIED OVER
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This bill proposes to task MSHA with creating and administering a supplementary, state-run housing choice voucher program. This program would run parallel to section 8, targeting slightly higher income levels, and would be funded at \$75,500,000 annually. Some of this money would have come from a graduated increase in the real estate transfer tax. This bill would have also amended the Maine Human Rights Act to include “Source of Income” protections for tenants, meaning they could not be discriminated against by a landlord because of their participation in a rental assistance program. Throughout this session, the bill was whittled down to a more modest version of itself and eventually carried over. We had questions about the program cost, how it would be administered and the “rental guarantee” component of the bill.

MSHA POSITION: NFNA

<a href="#">1721</a>	Create Transitional Housing Communities for Homeless Populations in the State	Duson	CARRIED OVER
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This bill would have created the Transitional Housing Community Construction Program Fund to create transitional housing communities for persons experiencing homelessness. It would have been allocated \$57,000,000 over 2 years. It would have required MSHA to create transitional housing communities that cover all 16 counties, with the Department of Health and Human Services coordinating services.

MSHA POSITION: NFNA

<a href="#">1810</a>	Expand the Maine Historic Rehabilitation Credit and Establish a Weatherization Tax Credit	Terry	CARRIED OVER
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This bill would have increased the tax credit for the rehabilitation and weatherization of historic properties and increased the allowed expenditures for this program.

MSHA POSITION: Has not come up yet

<a href="#">1844</a>	Support Emergency Housing Construction and Renovation by Creating a Matching Grant Program (formerly Construction, Renovation and Acquisition Statewide)	Arford	Funded in Change Package
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This bill would have directed MSHA to create the Emergency Housing Matching Grant Program to provide grants, up to \$500,000, for the creation, renovation, or leasing of buildings for emergency housing. It proposed funding at \$5,000,000 a year for 2 years. Ultimately, this bill passed and was funded off the table at \$257,000 one-time. The funding will become available in SFY 25.

MSHA POSITION: Support

<a href="#">1867</a>	Establish the Community Housing and Rural Development Authority	Lookner	CARRIED OVER
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This bill proposes a new quasi-government agency, the “Community Housing and Rural Development Authority” to create and maintain affordable public housing.

MSHA POSITION: followed but did not take a position – we may take a position next session.

<a href="#">1931</a>	Foster Stable and Affordable Home Ownership in Mobile Home Parks by Amending the Laws Relating to the Sale of Mobile Home Parks	Gere	IN LAW
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This bill requires owners of mobile home parks to give their residents notice of intent to sell. It requires a 60-day window where residents may make an offer to purchase their mobile home park; during this period, the owners must negotiate in good faith with their residents. This bill will help maintain mobile home parks, which serve as a naturally occurring type of affordable housing in Maine. The idea is residents will be able to purchase their park and turn it into a long lasting co-op, preventing profit-maximizing interests from purchasing the land and potentially displacing current residents.

MSHA POSITION: followed but did not take a position.