

SB 406

**Support Emergency Housing Assistance
& State-Local Partnership
For Immediate Release**

February 26, 2024

Re: SB 406, relative to emergency housing assistance and making an appropriation therefor

Dear Chairwoman Birdsell,

We are communicating on behalf of the mayors of 11 New Hampshire cities to express our support for SB 406, the amended version that has been shared with you, relative to emergency housing assistance.

We understand that based on the testimony offered at the Senate Health and Human Services Committee the original bill has been amended to reflect input from the NH Welfare Association and the Department of Health and Human Services.

Recently, the mayors convened our first meeting since the November municipal elections. Like you, we recognize the importance of having a collaborative relationship between the municipalities and state legislature, and look forward to working with you to find solutions to the biggest problems facing NH cities.

Additionally, we would like to thank you and this Committee for its steadfast work on behalf of the State of New Hampshire and the communities you represent. We deeply appreciate your efforts.

A top issue for all of us is the significant budget overruns cities are experiencing since the end of Pandemic Related Emergency Rental Assistance (ERAP) in January 2023. Since federal rental subsidies and a moratorium on evictions ended, NH cities are inundated with requests for sheltering, rental, and mortgage assistance. A preliminary assessment shows a doubling of costs in just this current fiscal year.

NH cities have a combined population of 540,000, approximately 40% of the state's population. It is in these municipalities where most social and medical services are provided, and hence where the greatest number of people needing assistance come for support services. As you know, in RSA 165:1, it states that "Whenever a person in any town is poor and unable to support himself, he shall be relieved and maintained by the overseers of public welfare of such town, whether or not he has resided there." As a result, our municipalities shoulder a heavy cost associated with the provision of these services.

We are meeting our statutory responsibilities at an unsustainably high cost to property taxpayers. We seek your support to lessening this cost and to finding equitable solutions that assist cities. We, and the NH Municipal Association which represents us, look forward to working with legislative leaders to finding ways of addressing our concerns with providing housing services.

We thank you for your consideration of this legislation. Please consider this group a resource moving forward and do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,



Mayor Jay Ruais
City of Manchester



Mayor Jay Kahn
City of Keene

On behalf of:

Mayor Dale Girard, Claremont
Mayor Byron O. Champlin, Concord
Mayor Timothy McNamara, Lebanon
Mayor Robert Carrier, Dover
Mayor Deaglan McEachern, Portsmouth
Mayor Matt Gerding, Somersworth

Mayor Jim Donchess, Nashua
Mayor Robert Cone, Berlin
Mayor Andrew Hosmer, Laconia

Cc: Senate President Jeb Bradley
Senator James Gray
Senator Sharon Carson
Senator Daniel Innis
Senator Ruth Ward
Senator Donna Soucy
Senator Cindy Rosenwald
Senator Rebecca Whitley
Senator Darly Abbas
Senator Debra Altschiller
Senator Kevin Avard
Senator Shannon Chandley
Senator Lou D'Allesandro
Senator Donovan Fenton
Senator Bill Gannon
Senator Carrie Gendreau
Senator Timothy Lang
Senator Keith Murphy
Senator Howard Pearl
Senator Rebecca Perkins Kwoka
Senator Suzanne Prentiss
Senator Denise Ricciardi
Senator David Watters