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## **421 NH Residents Urge State Budget Conferees to Fully Restore Funding for NH's Homeless Shelters**

June 15, 2015 (CONCORD, NH) – More than 400 NH residents have co-signed a letter from Housing Action NH asking House and Senate conferees to restore funding for homeless shelters in the next state budget.

Funding for the state's Emergency Shelters was level-funded in the Governor's budget proposal to \$4 million each year, but cut in half by the NH House. The Senate restored the full amount cut by the House, \$2 million in each year of the next budget. Now budget conferees will decide whether this item remains at full funding.

Shelter directors, Laconia's police chief, and Manchester's welfare commissioner all testified at the Senate Finance hearing in favor of restoring funding for Emergency Shelters in HB1. Individuals who had experienced homelessness and were assisted by state-funded homeless shelters also testified. All pointed to the cost to communities and to the state when shelters are forced to reduce programs -- some of which actually prevent homelessness and decrease the extent of time someone is homeless -- due to budget cuts.

"Full funding for Emergency Shelters is an essential part of a budget that protects the most vulnerable in NH and prevents costs from rising in other areas such as law enforcement, corrections and local welfare," said Elissa Margolin, director of Housing Action NH. "If one shelter cuts back or is forced to close due to state budget cuts, a ripple is felt across the entire system that is already stretched to its limits."

The group delivered the letter with individual comments by co-signers to Conferees today.

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*ABOUT HOUSING ACTION NH: Housing Action NH is a coalition of more than 70 organizations and businesses who share a common vision that everyone benefits when all Granite Staters have a safe, decent, affordable place to call home. Housing Action NH fosters and coordinates alliances to advocate for strong public investments and policies that preserve and increase the supply of housing affordable to NH's low income residents, and to end homelessness in New Hampshire. For a list of Housing Action NH members, please see <http://housingactionnh.org/who-we-are/members/>*