

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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**Justin L. Alford**  
*President of the Senate*

**State of Maine**  
**126<sup>th</sup> Maine Legislature**

**Mark Westwood Eves**  
*Speaker of the House*

May 10, 2013

Mary Mayhew, Commissioner  
Office of the Commissioner  
Department of Health and Human Services  
221 State Street  
11 State House Station  
Augusta, ME 04333-0011

Re: Emergency assistance to fire victims in the City of Lewiston

Dear Commissioner Mayhew:

As you know the recent tragic structure fires in the City of Lewiston have caused untold property damage and left more than 200 people homeless. The impact on the community, and most certainly on the victims, has been devastating. The Maine Legislature, along with the rest of the state, is deeply concerned about the welfare of the victims of the fires. We want to ensure that every effort is made to provide a safety net for those individuals and families who have been burned out of their homes and are without resources or access to essential services to assist them in their time of need.

While we understand that your department is currently exploring every avenue to provide emergency assistance to the fire victims, the Legislative Council felt it appropriate to lend its immediate support to provide resources to the victims of the fires. Toward that end, the Legislative Council held an emergency meeting on Thursday, May 9, 2013 and voted unanimously to transfer \$30,000 from the legislative account to the Department of Health and Human Services for the express purpose of having those funds available for reimbursement to the City of Lewiston for housing and other emergency aid for the victims in accordance with applicable DHHS rules and procedures and city requirements. The Council felt it was necessary, given the unique circumstances, until such time as other emergency funds are made available to the City. According to city administrators, the immediate need is for emergency housing arrangements, including providing security deposits and initial rent payments for those families who are not already receiving subsidized housing. More than 20 families are in this crisis situation. We ask that you accept the legislature's funds and work with the city to distribute them as soon as possible to allow the victims to arrange for immediate shelter and other emergency services.

The office of the Executive Director will work with your staff to transfer the funds to the appropriate account in your department and handle any other logistical details. The Executive Director's office will give this matter top priority so the funds may be available to the City of Lewiston without delay, and we ask that your department use its best efforts to expedite the process as well.

Thank you for your assistance in this critical matter, and if you have any questions, please contact the office of the Executive Director at 287-1615 at any time.

Sincerely,



Mark W. Eves, Chair  
Legislative Council



Justin L. Alfond, Vice-chair  
Legislative Council

Cc: Legislative Council Members  
Sen. Margaret Craven  
Rep. Michael Carey  
Rep. Michel Lajoie  
Rep. Nathan Libby  
Rep. Margaret Rotundo  
Rep. Wayne Werts  
Ed Barrett, City Administrator, City of Lewiston  
David E. Boulter, Executive Director of the Legislative Council  
Dawna Lopatosky, Legislative Finance Director

REP. MARK W. EVES  
CHAIR

SEN. JUSTIN L. ALFOND  
VICE-CHAIR

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
DAVID E. BOULTER



SEN. SETH A. GOODALL  
SEN. MICHAEL D. THIBODEAU  
SEN. TROY D. JACKSON  
SEN. ROGER J. KATZ  
REP. SETH A. BERRY  
REP. KENNETH W. FREDETTE  
REP. JEFFREY M. MCCABE  
REP. ALEXANDER R. WILLETTE

126<sup>TH</sup> MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE  
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

May 13, 2013

Ed Barrett, City Administrator  
City Administrator's Office  
City of Lewiston  
27 Pine Street  
Lewiston, ME 04240

Re: Emergency assistance to fire victims in the City of Lewiston

Dear Mr. Barrett:

This letter is to follow up on the letter that Legislative Council Chair Mark Eves and Legislative Council Vice-chair Justin Alfond sent to DHHS Commissioner Mary Mayhew on May 10, 2013, a copy of which was sent to you. As they indicated in that letter, the Legislative Council is deeply concerned about the welfare of the victims of the recent fires in Lewiston, and felt it was appropriate for the Legislative Council to transfer \$30,000 from its own budget for the express purpose of having those funds made available for reimbursement to the city for housing and other emergency aid it is extending to the fire victims. My staff is working with the Department of Health and Human Services to arrange for the fund transfer and as soon as we receive word from the department that it is prepared to accept the funds, they will be transferred immediately. I am hopeful that this action will occur today so the money may be used for emergency assistance without further delay.

Although the Legislative Council felt the action it took was necessary and appropriate given the circumstances, it was something that is not in the ordinary operation of the council. As such, the council is very interested in feedback from the city on how the funds were used and their effectiveness in assisting the families and individuals who were left homeless due to the fire and without access to essential services to assist them. The Legislative Council would appreciate receiving a letter from the city that provides its assessment on the use of the funds once the situation in Lewiston has stabilized and you have an opportunity to do so. We would be grateful for such a letter. Please address the correspondence to Rep. Mark W. Eves, Chair and Sen. Justin L. Alfond, Vice-chair, Maine Legislative Council, c/o Office of the Executive Director, 115 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0115.

In the meantime if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at 287-1615 or by email at [david.boulter@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:david.boulter@legislature.maine.gov) at any time. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David E. Boulter".

David E. Boulter  
Executive Director of the Legislative Council

Cc: Dawna Lopatosky, Legislative Finance Director