Testimony for the Appropriations Hearing/Department of Housing/February 27, 2019

Senator Osten, Senator Formica, Representative Walker, Representative Lavielle and Members of the Committee.

Being an employee of FISH for over 24 years; I have witnessed people succeed, fail, get back on their feet and flourish.

In the beginning of my employment in 1995, the number of people staying at the shelter was minimal. Through the years I have watched the 35 bed shelter remain at capacity on a regular basis, along with the additional house which FISH purchased a number of years ago to “accommodate” homeless families with children.

Contrary to popular belief, homelessness is not just caused by drugs, alcohol or addictive behavior; it is a “side-effect” of these afflictions; it is also a “side-effect” of the economy, lack of services for people trying desperately to maintain their housing and supporting themselves and their families.

The FISH Homeless Shelter has assisted numerous individuals and families with obtaining financial services, fixing their credit history and securing housing.

Should the funding be cut in any way to the Shelter; FISH might struggle to keep its doors open and leave the already homeless people without a roof over their heads. Living in the woods in a tent in the middle of winter is not to be considered “Housed”, safe and even acceptable for any human being, let alone the possibility and likelihood that there may be children involved and living under these conditions.

Please support the DOH budget proposal fully.

Sincerely,

Robin L. King

Robin L. King-Program/Facility Manager