



Janet T. Mills  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
1 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE  
04333-0001

February 9, 2022

Maine Veterans' Homes Board of Trustees  
Maine Veterans' Homes Central Office  
460 Civic Center Drive  
Augusta, ME 04330

Dear Members of the Board of Trustees:

I was recently informed of the Board's vote to close the Maine Veterans' Homes in Caribou and Machias and I write to express my deep concern with this drastic move.

As I understand it, the primary justification for the Board's decision is twofold: 1) there has been a steady decrease in the number of veterans these facilities are serving over the years; and 2) like much of the state and nation, the facilities are experiencing a shortage of qualified staff to provide care.

Closure of the facilities in Machias and Caribou would significantly reduce the footprint of Maine Veterans' Homes, leaving no homes Downeast or north of Bangor, and displacing approximately 70 veterans. Even now, the facility planned for Augusta is still in the construction phase.

While I appreciate the Board's commitment to finding other accommodations for our veterans, the impact on the veterans and their families should not be underestimated – particularly with such an aggressive timeline for closure. I believe it is paramount that the Board consider every option to keep the homes open and allow veterans to remain where they are before resorting to closure. As you consider all options, I encourage the Board to conduct a thorough review of existing resources and assets which may be utilized to avoid closure of these homes.

I urge the Board to reconsider its recent vote to close the homes and instead allow veterans in Aroostook and Washington counties to have access to the care they have earned and they deserve. At the very least, I request that the Board postpone any closure for two years to provide ample time for continued dialogue and to plan for the future of the facilities and for the continued care of the many veterans who call them home. I have also directed my Administration, including the



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Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management and the Department of Health and Human Services, to provide assistance as you consider other options.

Thank you for your consideration of my request and for your service on behalf of Maine veterans. I know you share an unflagging commitment to caring for them, and I trust we may work together to provide continued care.

Sincerely,



Janet T. Mills  
Governor



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