

STATE OF MAINE

—
IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD
TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-FIVE

—
S.P. 594 - L.D. 1453

Resolve, to Establish the Housing Production Innovation Working Group

Emergency preamble. Whereas, acts and resolves of the Legislature do not become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted as emergencies; and

Whereas, this resolve establishes a working group to study and advise on the potential for innovative housing construction technologies to reduce housing production costs and accelerate housing production in the State; and

Whereas, the study must be initiated before the 90-day period expires so that the study may be completed and a report submitted in time for consideration during the next legislative session; and

Whereas, in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of Maine and require the following legislation as immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety; now, therefore, be it

Sec. 1. Working group established. Resolved: That the Housing Production Innovation Working Group, referred to in this resolve as "the working group," is established.

Sec. 2. Working group membership. Resolved: That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the working group consists of 11 members appointed as follows:

1. Two members of the Senate, including one member from each of the 2 parties holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature and who serve on the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development, appointed by the President of the Senate;
2. Two members of the House of Representatives, including one member from each of the 2 parties holding the largest number of seats in the Legislature and who serve on the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development, appointed by the Speaker of the House;
3. The Commissioner of Professional and Financial Regulation or the commissioner's designee;

4. The Commissioner of Economic and Community Development or the commissioner's designee;

5. The Director of the Office of Policy Innovation and the Future or the director's designee;

6. The Director of the Maine Office of Community Affairs or the director's designee; and

7. Three members from the residential construction and building materials manufacturing industries, one appointed by the President of the Senate, one appointed by the Speaker of the House and one appointed by the Governor.

Sec. 3. Chairs. Resolved: That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, at the first meeting of the working group, the members shall elect, by majority vote of those present, 2 members appointed under section 2, subsections 3 to 7 as chairs of the working group.

Sec. 4. Appointments; convening of working group. Resolved: That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, all appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative Council and the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development once all appointments have been completed. After appointment of all members, the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development shall call and convene the first meeting of the working group. If 30 days or more after the effective date of this resolve a majority of but not all appointments have been made, the Commissioner of Economic and Community Development may request authority and the Legislative Council may grant authority for the working group to meet and conduct its business.

Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved: That the working group shall study the potential for innovative housing construction technologies to reduce housing production costs and accelerate housing production in the State. Innovative housing construction technologies may include modular housing, componentized housing, 3-dimensional printing or other approaches to residential construction. The working group shall consider regulatory and financial solutions to barriers to achieving this potential, including, at a minimum, the following:

1. Demand-side barriers that inhibit adoption of factory-made housing technologies, including:

A. A lack of familiarity and expertise among homebuilding professionals, developers and homeowners; and

B. Insufficient order volumes and consistency to achieve significant economies of scale for new or expanded off-site production approaches; and

2. Production-side barriers that inhibit the availability and cost competitiveness of factory-made housing technologies, including:

A. Varying building codes, inspection standards and approval processes;

B. Inconsistent licensing requirements for factory-made housing technologies;

C. A lack of workers in relevant fields trained in factory-made housing production and construction; and

D. Challenges with transporting and exporting prefabricated housing products made in the State.

In researching these topics and establishing recommendations, the working group shall consult with individuals active in the housing industry, including those representing manufacturers, builders, developers, trades, training providers, regulators and finance organizations and those engaging in research at institutions of higher education in the State.

Sec. 6. Staff assistance. Resolved: That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the Department of Economic and Community Development shall provide necessary staffing services to the working group.

Sec. 7. Report. Resolved: That, no later than December 3, 2025, the working group shall submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, for presentation to the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development. The Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development is authorized to report out legislation related to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

Emergency clause. In view of the emergency cited in the preamble, this legislation takes effect when approved.