



County of York
Office of the Chief Fire Administrator

149 Jordan Springs Road
Alfred, ME 04002



132nd Maine State Legislature
Committee on Housing and Economic Development
State Capitol Building
Augusta, ME 04033

Testimony submitted
electronically.

March 3, 2025

Dear Chairs Curry and Gere,

I am writing in strong opposition to LD659 “An Act to Reduce Housing Costs by Not Requiring Fire Sprinkler Systems for Single-family Homes and Duplexes”. This bill will have no effect on reducing the cost of housing in Maine or increasing the availability of housing.

According to *Angi.com* the cost of a residential sprinkler system is \$4,000.00 on the high end <https://www.angi.com/articles/home-fire-sprinklers-are-affordable.htm> . In rural areas without municipal water systems the cost may go to \$7,000.00. This is still an insignificant percentage of the overall cost. Installation of a life safety sprinkler system adds no additional time to construction. According to *HomeGuide.com* a “A fire sprinkler system costs \$1.50 to \$3.00 per square foot if installed during new construction or \$2.00 to \$7.00 per square foot on average to retrofit an existing building” <https://homeguide.com/costs/fire-sprinkler-system-cost> . The *National Fire Sprinkler Association* www.nfsa.org has more detailed information on the costs of installing residential sprinklers <https://nfsa.org/2020/09/15/the-true-cost-to-install-a-residential-sprinkler-system/> .

These residential life safety sprinklers systems are designed to operate from the home’s potable water system. They are considered “egress” systems. Meaning, they buy the family time to get out of the home in the event of a fire. They keep the fire “in check” until the fire department arrives. These systems are not as large and complex as a commercial system. You can learn more about home systems from the *Home Fire Sprinkler Coalition* at <https://homefiresprinkler.org/> or the *National Fire Protection Association* at <https://www.nfpa.org/education-and-research/home-fire-safety/fire-sprinkler-initiative> .

This bill also is in direct conflict with the spirit of “Home Rule” in Maine. This bill will prohibit a community from enacting a residential life safety sprinkler ordinance. Those pro-active communities that have already adopted such ordinance will no longer be allowed to enforce these safety requirements.

This bill is not about adding affordable housing or reducing the cost of housing. This bill is truly about adding profit to builders at the expense of a family’s safety. Homes today burn much faster and hotter than they did 40 years ago. Homes contain more petroleum-based products (IE: plastics, laminates, furniture, etc.). Homes are built with “engineered materials” light-weight trusses, floor joists, stair stringers, that will deteriorate faster under fire than traditional lumber. These engineered materials and components are cheaper to use than traditional lumber. They burn much faster.



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A national poll conducted by Harris Interactive® suggests that a residential sprinkler may increase a home's value. A residential fire sprinkler system may result in a discount on homeowner's insurance. The HFSC has more information on this topic <https://homefiresprinkler.org/fire-sprinklers-insurance-discounts/#>

The National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) provides a convincing argument to discourage residential fire sprinklers. What is their motive? Who are they looking out for? Is the NAHB as concerned or invested in Maine as your Firefighters are? What group is truly concerned about and committed to making Mainers safer and reducing risk in our communities?

Please kill this bill in committee. It "Ought Not to Pass". It will only make Maine less safe and have no effect on the cost or availability of housing. It is a slap in the face to the many Fire Service Professionals in Maine who have fought and lobbied hard to get life safety sprinklers in their communities. To make their communities safer places to live.

I appreciate your time on this matter.

Very Respectfully,

Roger S. Hooper, FO-IV, FI-III
Chief Fire Administrator, York County

CC: Via Email
Sen Bailey
Sen Curry
Sen Harrington
Sen Ingwerson
Sen Woodsome
Rep Eder
Rep Gere
Rep Malon
Rep Parry
Rep Roberts

rshooper@yorkcountymaine.gov
(207) 459-2496