

MAINE SERVICE CENTERS COALITION

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Testimony of the Maine Service Centers Coalition

LD 427, An Act to Prohibit Mandatory Parking Space Minimums in State and Municipal Building Codes, and LD 659, An Act to Reduce Housing Costs by Not Requiring Fire Sprinkler Systems for Single-family Homes and Duplexes

Senator Curry, Representative Geer and esteemed members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee, the Maine Service Centers Coalition is submitting testimony in opposition to LD 427, An Act to Prohibit Mandatory Parking Space Minimums in State and Municipal Building Codes, and LD 659, An Act to Reduce Housing Costs by Not Requiring Fire Sprinkler Systems for Single-family Homes and Duplexes.

The Maine Service Centers Coalition, comprised of 26 towns and cities across the state, articulates the importance of healthy and thriving service center communities, advocates for public policy that supports and contributes to the economic and social viability of our communities, and collaborates with municipal officials, legislators, state agencies and non-profits to pursue quality of life for all who live and work in our state.

The language proposed in both LD 427 and LD 659 violates a fundamental principle of Maine government – local control. Municipalities have the authority to develop and implement their own building codes based upon what they determine to be best, necessary and, importantly, safest for their communities.

These bills remove that authority and instead have the state dictate what would be included in municipal building codes. LD 427 tells us not to impose “a minimum parking requirement for a new development, land use or occupancy of land or a building.” LD 659 states we cannot require “the installation or use of fire sprinkler systems in a single-family dwelling or duplex.”

Maine has long recognized local control as sacrosanct with local issues decided at the level of government closest to its citizens. If state government is given the responsibility to determine local issues, like parking and fire sprinkler requirements, for our cities and towns, municipalities should be fairly reimbursed by the state.

We respectfully urge you to vote ought not to pass on LD 427 and LD 659.

Thank you for your time.