

March 9, 2025

Testimony,
in Support of

LD 603 An Act to Ensure That the Exemption of Certain Agricultural Buildings from the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code Includes Maple Sugarhouses

Dear Senator Curry, Rep. Gere and Members of Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development, I am Richard Morrill from Windham.

As a sugar maker and as President of the Southern Maine Maple Sugarmakers Association, I am writing in support of **LD 603 An Act to Ensure That the Exemption of Certain Agricultural Buildings from the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code Includes Maple Sugarhouses** to:

- ensure that Maple Sugar Houses and Maple Sugar Shacks are included in the Agricultural Building Exemption in the existing **Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code**, and
- ensure consistency among town code enforcement officers (CEOs) across the state as they apply the **Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code**.

There are nearly 600 licensed producers in the state and hundreds of hobby producers, many of whom become licensed producers as they grow. All of these licensed producers have a structure in which the syrup is produced, according to Maine requirements for licensure. The structure is where The **Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code** becomes a concern. Some CEOs do not consider maple syrup production facilities to be an agricultural building, thus are not included in the Agricultural Exemption currently provided in the **Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code**.

When the code is applied to a sugar house outside of the exemption, the requirements are excessive and can lead to very high building costs. The additional costs associated with building a sugar house outside of the exemption could cause a sugar maker to scrap the project.

The maple syrup industry in Maine is growing as our residents seek to buy local and eat healthy. Let's not put unnecessary and expensive barriers in place that deter growth as backyard sugar makers seek to become licensed with a structure that meets requirements, or currently licensed sugar makers expand their operation to meet consumer demand.

My second point is just as critical as the first - clarifying the agricultural exemption to specifically include maple sugar houses and maple sugar shacks will create consistency among all CEOs in the state of Maine as they review such a project in view of the **Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code**. Inconsistency among CEOs from across the state becomes very

apparent when sugarmakers compare notes. Let's make the job of a CEO easier by making the agricultural exemption crystal clear.

Thank you for reviewing this testimony and for keeping a key agricultural product in mind as you review **LD 603 An Act to Ensure That the Exemption of Certain Agricultural Buildings from the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code Includes Maple Sugarhouses** .

Sincerely,

Richard Morrill
Owner, Nash Valley Farm
President, Southern Maine Maple Sugarmakers Association