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Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association

Neither For Nor Against

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

March 11, 2025

Sen. Curry, Rep. Gere and esteemed members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee, my name is Rebecca Graham, and I am submitting testimony neither for nor against LD 603, *An Act to Ensure That the Exemption of Certain Agricultural Buildings from the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code Includes Maple Sugarhouses* of MMA's Legislative Policy Committee (LPC). Our LPC is composed of municipal officials from across Maine, elected by their peers to represent communities with vastly different enforcement staff, resources and capacities.

Currently, the Maine Uniform and Building and Energy Code (MUBEC) provides an exemption for buildings that are used for exclusive agricultural use which the processing of maple syrup and associated products would qualify for. However, officials are concerned where there is a building that is also used for public sales, public programs or even an adjoining transient rental, in conjunction with agricultural processing or storage, this change may reduce the ability to require adequate ingress and egress for members of the public and important safety considerations, not intended.

While there may be some other reason such a building has been deemed by a local authority to need to meet MUBEC standards, we do not believe it is the intention of the sponsors to remove important protections for broader activities where the public has an expectation of uniform standard building protections that include mobility access, or where a residential rental unit may also be attached, simply because storage of maple products are occurring in the same building.

For these reasons, officials ask that you consider what problem this bill seeks to address and that you consider carefully writing an amendment that is narrowly tailored to protect all other possible building use combinations that will be disrupted as drafted.