

April 4, 2025

To: Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
From: Steve Sloan, Fire Chief

RE: Maine LD 1005 *“An Act to Allow Municipal Fire Departments with Trained Personnel to Conduct Fire Sprinkler Plans Review”*

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and esteemed members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety:

My name is Steve Sloan, and I am writing today to express my strong support for LD 1005, *An Act to Allow Municipal Fire Departments with Trained Personnel to Conduct Sprinkler Plan Reviews*.

This legislation represents a common-sense approach to increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of the plan review process in Maine. By allowing municipal fire departments—when they have qualified, trained personnel—to conduct sprinkler plan reviews, we can significantly streamline the construction permitting process, while maintaining safety and compliance with all relevant standards.

First and foremost, LD 1005 would improve operational efficiency. Many local fire departments already have personnel who are highly trained and certified in fire protection systems and codes. Enabling them to perform these reviews locally reduces redundancy and makes use of existing expertise within the community.

Second, this bill would help reduce potential delays in the permitting and construction process. Under the current system, sprinkler plan reviews may be subject to backlogs at the state level due capacity limitations or unforeseen delays. This can lead to unnecessary waiting periods for developers, contractors, and property owners. Allowing municipalities to take on this responsibility, when they are equipped to do so, will alleviate pressure on centralized resources and allow for faster processing.

Third, municipal fire departments are uniquely positioned to ensure that sprinkler plans conform to local codes and ordinances. Local officials are intimately familiar with the specific fire safety needs, zoning requirements, and building characteristics of their communities. Their input during the plan review process helps ensure that projects meet not only state requirements but also the specific needs of the municipality, improving public safety outcomes.

Finally, this bill supports faster turnaround times for permit issuance, which directly reduces total construction timelines. In today's economic climate, where time is money, any improvement in

processing speed can make a meaningful difference. This legislation will help accelerate project completion and occupancy, encouraging growth and investment across Maine communities.

LD 1005 empowers local authorities, promotes public safety, and supports the needs of the construction and development sectors. I urge the committee to support this bill and allow qualified municipal fire departments to contribute more directly to this important aspect of community safety and development.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Steve Sloan
Fire Chief, City of Westbrook, Maine