

Leon Genre
Portland
LD 1226

Contractors
Submitted by Leon Genre
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Chairman and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Leon Genre, and I live in Portland. I've been working in the trades in Maine for nearly 20 years, and for the past eight years, I've been part of the management team at a general contracting firm. I've seen this industry from both the job site and the office—from the labor of digging foundations to the complexities of budgeting, scheduling, and client communication.

I've also had the experience of becoming a licensed builder from in the state of Michigan, which has long required licensure for residential contractors. That experience has shown me firsthand the value of requiring builders to meet a minimum standard of competency and professionalism before taking on the responsibility of building someone's home.

I strongly support LD 1226 because I believe the responsibilities of a qualified general contractor are twofold: first, to build homes that are healthy, durable, and resilient; and second, to protect the financial interests of their clients. Homes are not just shelters—they are the largest investments most families will ever make. And yet, here in Maine, there are no licensure requirements ensuring that the people entrusted with building those homes are qualified to do so.

In recent years, we've seen building and energy codes become increasingly stringent—and for good reason. We're asking homes to do more: to be more energy-efficient, more resilient to climate impacts, and healthier for the people living in them. But that level of performance doesn't happen by accident. It requires a deep understanding of building science, modern construction practices, and code compliance.

In addition to technical building knowledge, a competent contractor must have a basic understanding of contract law, know how to perform accurate material take-offs and build reliable cost estimates, and be able to manage budget overruns in real time. A contractor must understand how to track the finances of a project responsibly and ethically, ensuring that funds are available when needed for labor, materials, and overhead. These skills are fundamental to delivering a project that meets client expectations and avoids disputes, delays, and cost escalations. Licensing could help ensure that builders have at least a foundational grasp of these critical aspects of the work.

While we rely on local code enforcement officers to act as safeguards, their role is not to ensure best practices—it is to enforce the minimum standards. And even then, enforcement capacity varies from town to town. In some municipalities, a builder may never interact with a building official beyond pulling a permit.

This gap leaves Maine homeowners vulnerable. I've seen too many examples of incomplete work, failed systems, or costly remediation caused by contractors who lacked the training or accountability to do the job right. It's frustrating for those of us who work hard to uphold high standards, and it undermines the reputation of our entire industry.

Licensing won't solve every problem, but it's a foundational step toward protecting consumers and raising the floor of professionalism in our field. Requiring builders to meet basic qualifications, carry insurance, and adhere to ethical standards is not only reasonable—it's overdue.

Thank you for your time, and I urge you to support LD 1226.

Respectfully submitted,

Leon Genre