

Written Testimony Regarding Home Building Contractor Licensing

As a custom home builder with 40 years of experience in southern Maine, I am submitting this written testimony to express my concerns about the proposed licensing of Home Building Contractors.

My extensive experience includes 13 years of service on the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC) board as an original member since its creation. I was honored to be appointed three times to this position by both Republican and Democratic governors, reflecting a bipartisan recognition of my judgment and expertise. I have also maintained over 30 years of membership in the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Maine, and more than 20 years as a board member of that association. Throughout my tenure on the MUBEC board, I've consistently advocated for common-sense approaches to regulation, including successfully preventing mandatory fire sprinkler requirements in all new homes that would have significantly increased costs without proportional benefits.

The challenge of unscrupulous contractors is one our industry has faced for decades. However, our experience shows that consumer education is far more effective than additional regulation. Teaching homeowners how to identify reputable builders, check references, and review past work has proven invaluable in protecting consumers.

Unfortunately, some consumers will always be drawn to unrealistically low prices and grand promises, regardless of warning signs. Creating another regulatory hurdle for honest builders won't deter those intent on defrauding customers—they simply operate outside the law already and would continue to do so.

This proposed licensing requirement would inevitably increase costs for legitimate builders, costs that would ultimately be passed on to homeowners. While established firms like mine could readily absorb these expenses, I worry deeply about the impact on working-class Maine families. As a multi-generation Mainer, I've witnessed firsthand how each additional regulation, however well-intentioned, places homeownership further out of reach for younger generations of Mainers.

Rather than implementing licensing requirements that would burden honest businesses while doing little to stop bad actors, I urge this committee to focus on consumer education initiatives. Teaching Mainers how to recognize reputable builders and avoid potential fraud would be more effective and less costly than creating another layer of bureaucracy.

Thank you for your consideration of these concerns.

Barry A. Chase

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