

Justin Brown

LD 1226

State of Maine Legislature – LD 1226 (HP 801) An Act to Protect Consumers by
Licensing Residential Building Contractors
Public Hearing Comments from Justin Brown – 4/17/25

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee, I want to thank you all for the opportunity to submit comments on this matter. My name is Justin Brown, and I have been a Code Enforcement Officer for the Town of Falmouth for approximately 19 years.

I am submitting testimony today in support of LD 1226. I had hoped to speak today but unfortunately, I could not attend in person. Just for clarity, this testimony is my own and not necessarily the views of the Town of Falmouth.

It has always struck me as odd that so many trades in the State of Maine require some form of licensing and continuing education yet general building contractors do not. As a practical example of how little this makes sense, a person installing the venting for the plumbing system in my families home is required to obtain a license after training often including years of on-the-job apprentice type experience, and is expected to receive continuing education to maintain that license, while the person placing the engineered components supporting the entire roof system under which my child sleeps every night, needs no licensing whatsoever. The potential outcome of a plumbing venting error could be poorly draining fixtures, an unpleasant mess, loads of frustration, and an expensive repair. The potential outcome of a poorly installed roof system could be fatal.

It feels like the news over the last few years has been rife with stories of contractors abandoning jobs while retaining partial payments for work incomplete, substandard work being found years after a job is complete often after catastrophic failure or injury, and other nightmare projects that result in a homeowner with money lost, incomplete projects, or far worse. Currently, the only mechanism I am aware of for a person attempting to hold contractors accountable is through legal action. This can be a difficult approach due to many factors, most notably cost, which often results in a person having to weigh whether it is even worth attempting to bring legal action. Licensing offers conscientious builders' legitimacy to their competence and skill while hopefully deterring any builder who does not have the skill or experience to perform the task. It also offers some meaningful risk to licensed individuals who repeatedly use poor building practices, which is certainly not the case now.

I have, and continue to maintain, multiple certifications to be able to perform my duties as a Code Enforcement Officer as mandated by the state. Why would the builder whose work I am inspecting not need the same level of certification I hold at the very least?

This proposal appears to be well structured and includes reasonable definitions, exemptions, the establishment of a regulatory Board containing members with diverse backgrounds, licensing guidelines, and repercussions. I understand the logistical details of setting up such a system can be difficult to get perfect and not be shocked at potential amendments, but I believe the structure and substance of this proposal are worth pursuing.

Thank you for your time.

Justin Brown
Farmingdale Maine
jbrownbusiness@gmail.com