



## **Town of Brunswick, Maine**

**Incorporated 1739  
Brunswick Fire Department**

**"Working Today for a Safer Tomorrow"**

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**May 8, 2025**

**RE: LD 1272, An Act to Address the Housing Crisis by Reducing Barriers to Building More Accessory Dwelling Units**

**To whom it may concern:**

**My name is Joshua Shean, I am the Deputy Chief for the Brunswick Fire Department. I am here today to speak in opposition to LD 1272, An Act to Address the Housing Crisis by Reducing Barriers to Building More Accessory Dwelling Units.**

**The proposed language is in direct conflict with the adopted building codes and fire and life safety codes. LD 1272 allows for the construction of up to three dwelling units in a single building. This exceeds the practical definition of an Accessory Dwelling Unit. Additionally, LD 1272 Section 11 removes the requirement for the property owner to reside at the same location as the Accessory Dwelling Units. Both of these provisions contradict the approved conditions for an ADU as outlined in Appendix BC of the International Residential Code. The proposed language of LD 1272 does not reduce barriers to housing, it creates a pathway to subvert the codes and standards that are in place to ensure occupant safety in multi-family apartment buildings.**

**The removal of fire sprinkler requirements further limits the options for the placement of new housing. NFPA 1, the Fire Codes, sets the minimum requirements for access roads. Brunswick is seeing an increase in the demand for growth and development. Through this process, new building lots are being formed on roads that started as driveways, and do not meet the required dimensions for an access road. It would be a financial hardship to require dramatic road improvements for the addition of a few housing units. The fire code does allow for new construction on non-conforming roads if the unit is protected by an automatic fire sprinkler system. The language of LD1272, prohibiting the requirement of a fire sprinkler system, would remove this as an available option and more costly road improvement would be required.**

**The direct removal of automatic sprinkler systems is an affront to the preservation of accessible housing.**

**On June 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, the Brunswick Fire Department responded to a structure fire at a five-unit multi-family building. The units were provided for families using rental subsidy programs, and they had 4 bedrooms each. The fire**

started as a stovetop kitchen fire. There was a significant delay in the activation of 911 services as the occupants attempted to extinguish the fire themselves. When the fire department arrived, the fire had completely destroyed the apartment where the fire started. The fire also extended into both adjacent units to the left and right. All five families were displaced. Three of the families experienced considerable loss of personal belongings. The management company is still working with the insurance company to secure a settlement and the funds to rebuild the structure. If this building had been equipped with an automatic fire sprinkler system, the damage most likely would have been contained to the kitchen. Four of the 5 families would not have been displaced as a result of the fire, and loss of personal belongings would have been substantially less. The overall damages could have been repaired within the means of the organization's operating budget, and all five units would be available today.

This example demonstrates how the installation of fire suppression sprinklers is not a barrier to housing and is a resource to increase safety, reduce loss, and protect housing availability. Please consider these examples as you discuss LD 1272. I strongly encourage a vote of ought not pass for LD1272.

Respectfully submitted,



Joshua Shean  
Deputy Chief, Fire Prevention  
Brunswick Fire Department