



• Local Government Center 60 Community Drive Augusta, Maine 04330-9486

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development,

My name is William Gillespie, and I am honored to serve as the Fire Chief for the Town of Liberty. I am writing today in my capacity as President and Legislative Liaison for the Maine Fire Chiefs Association, representing over 400 Fire Chiefs across Maine, I am writing to express my strong opposition to **LD 1272, "An Act to Address the Housing Crisis by Reducing Barriers to Building More Accessory Dwelling Units."**

This legislation appears to be another attempt to compromise the safety of Maine firefighters and residents by eliminating sprinkler systems, purportedly to reduce costs. While we acknowledge the importance of cost savings and progress, we cannot support measures that sacrifice life safety. The alarming statistics of 30 firefighters killed in the line of duty and 873 people killed in house fires nationwide underscore the critical need for robust safety standards.

Earlier in this session, the fire service testified in opposition to **LD 659, "An Act to Reduce Housing Costs by Not Requiring Fire Sprinkler Systems for Single-family Homes and Duplexes."**

For many years, the Maine Fire Service has presented bills highlighting the crisis facing emergency services, particularly within the fire service. We have emphasized the severe decline in staffing levels and the persistent challenges in recruiting volunteers, which compromises the ability of many departments to respond effectively. Given our reliance on volunteers in most departments, sprinkler systems provide crucial time for occupants to escape and for firefighters to arrive on the scene.

I respectfully urge all stakeholders to explore alternative solutions to reduce housing costs without compromising life safety standards.

Respectfully

Chief Bill Gillespie

President MFCA