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LD 1829

An Act to Build Housing for Maine Families and Attract Workers to Businesses by Amending the Laws Governing Municipal Land Use Decisions

Senator Curry, Representative Gere and distinguished members of The Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development. My name is William St. Michel, I am the retired Fire Chief of The Town of Durham and currently The Executive Director for Maine Fire Chiefs' Association. Maine Fire Chiefs Association is in opposition of LD 1829 and the recommended amendment to 1829.

LD 1829 removes barriers to building more accessory dwelling units by increasing risks to occupants and responders. It will allow for more dwelling units on a lot, while simultaneously impeding a community's capability to require sprinklers. The title of LD 1829 alludes to amending the laws governing municipal land use decisions, sprinklers are not a land use decision and should not be included in 1829 or the proposed amendment.

Residential Sprinklers are a Life Safety System first; property conservation is a bonus. Residential Sprinklers are designed to give occupants time to get out. Construction techniques allow for lighter weight construction, our life styles have increased the fuel load; lending to hotter fires with structures being compromised far sooner. Couple that with staffing shortages for many emergency services and we create a dangerous combination. Because of that many communities have chosen to put the safety of their citizens and responders first and have adopted residential sprinkler ordinances.

Residential sprinklers are not a barrier to building, any more than seat belts or air bags are a barrier to vehicle manufacturing. They should be an expectation. There are a multitude of incentives for cost savings with the installation of residential sprinklers. The 130th Legislature recognized this with LD 1364 A Resolve to Study Incentives for Residential Fire Sprinkler Systems. It established a committee of 49 contributors and resulted in a report submitted to The Joint Standing Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety on December 1, 2021 that outlined those opportunities.

Maine Fire Chiefs' Association is **Opposed to LD 1829 and the recommended amendment to 1829**. We ask for your support and your vote of **Ought Not To Pass**.

Thank You!

Respectfully,
William St. Michel
Executive Director
Maine Fire Chiefs' Association