

Committee on Housing and Economic Development
Testimony of Corinne Watson, Tiny Homes of Maine
March 5, 2026

Testimony in support of LD 2224 – An Act to Reduce Certain Costs Associated with Residential Construction

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

My name is Corinne Watson, and I am the General Manager of Tiny Homes of Maine, an organization dedicated to advancing the development and adoption of small-scale, attainable housing across our state. I am submitting this testimony in support of LD 2224, "An Act to Reduce Certain Costs Associated with Residential Construction."

Maine faces a well-documented housing shortage, and the cost of residential construction is one of the most significant barriers to expanding our housing supply. Tiny Homes of Maine works directly with builders, prospective homeowners, and municipalities to make small-footprint housing a viable solution and regulatory cost burdens are among the most common obstacles we encounter.

LD 2224 takes meaningful, practical steps to address those burdens. The bill's exemption of smoke partitions for elevator hoistway doors and elevator emergency 2-way communication systems from the Maine Uniform Building Code will reduce unnecessary costs in multi-unit residential construction without compromising resident safety. These provisions reflect a welcome effort to right-size code requirements to Maine's actual needs rather than defaulting to the broadest national standards.

We particularly support the creation of a working group to study the housing and life safety impacts of residential fire sprinkler requirements and explore ways to lower associated costs. Sprinkler system installation costs are a significant line item in small residential construction, including the multi-unit buildings of three or more units that tiny home and small-footprint housing communities often involve. We are confident that a thoughtful, data-driven review, conducted with input from fire safety experts, builders, and housing developers, will yield actionable recommendations to reduce these costs without sacrificing life safety outcomes.

The directive to update state standards to comply with the 2025 edition of NFPA 72 also signals a commitment to keeping Maine's code framework current and streamlined. This is something that benefits builders, inspectors, and residents alike.

Tiny Homes of Maine urges the Committee to give LD 2224 a favorable report. Every step we take to reduce the cost of building homes in Maine is a step toward housing more Mainers. This bill is a smart, targeted effort to do exactly that.

Sincerely,

Corinne Watson
General Manager
Tiny Homes of Maine