

March 5, 2026

Committee on Housing and Economic Development

LD 2224 An Act to Reduce Certain Costs Associated with Residential Construction

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this testimony as **strong support** overall for LD 2224. This legislation continues the smart actions taken by the Legislature over the past years, continues to improve the ability of the residents of Maine to improve our towns and cities, and be allowed to construct the dwellings we need for all of the people of Maine.

For all too long national code making bodies have added building regulations that do not have a cost-benefit analysis behind them unlike the typical legislation you review. This “code creep” has had the effect of making the kinds of normal buildings that the people of Maine have always lived and built in difficult or illegal to construct. This is not out of ill will, but a result of a never-ending call for increased safety standards, without a check on if what we are currently building is “safe enough”. Bills like this one are enormously helpful in aligning current regulations with both our historic building practices and our hopes for the future of a prosperous Maine for all.

Specific Comments below:

Sec 1. 10 MSRA 9722 sub-6 B-1

Very sensible. Agricultural buildings should be exempt from energy code.

Sec 2. 10 MSRA 9722 sub-6 B-1

Strong support. Elevators in modern sprinklered 4+ story buildings are currently one of our safest building types state-wide. Additional hoistway protection has not passed a cost-benefit analysis before being enacted into national building codes. Recommend not requiring in Maine.

Sec 3. 10 MSRA 9722 sub-6 B-1

Strong support. Elevators in modern sprinklered 4+ story buildings are currently one of our safest building types state-wide, and adding two-way video communication has not been proven to increase safety in a necessary way. Recommend not requiring in Maine.

Sec 5. Sprinkler working group.

Strong support. Cost-benefit analysis needs to be carried out for sprinklers across residential building types. The active fire-suppression industry’s push for active fire sprinklers in every building type, in every building situation, needs to be compared against passive fire protection methods like non-combustible (fireproof) construction methods, and also evaluated against actual safety track records for various building types. What we hear from fire chiefs across the state is that old unprotected buildings are Maine’s fire safety problem, not modern new construction apartment buildings. We need to concentrate our efforts on improving fire safety in older building types, not further increasing the costs of already very safe new construction buildings.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jesse Thompson', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Jesse Thompson

Maine Licensed Architect, FAIA, CPHC
Kaplan Thompson Architects'

Resident of Portland, ME