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**Testimony Neither for Nor Against LD 2224
“An Act to Reduce Certain Costs Associated with Residential Construction”**

**J. Andrew Cashman on behalf of the Maine Association of REALTORS®
March 5, 2026**

Senator Curry, Representative Gere and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development, my name is Andy Cashman. I am the Founder of Resolve Government Relations. We represent the Maine Association of REALTORS®, a professional trade association established in 1936 with over 6,500 members statewide. REALTORS® protect private property rights, build Maine communities, and grow our state’s economy. Our members represent buyers and sellers involved in both residential and commercial real estate transactions. Our membership also includes industry affiliates, such as lenders, closing agents, title agents, appraisers, building inspectors, surveyors, etc. The Maine Association is chartered by the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), the largest trade association in the country.

The Maine Association of REALTORS® is Neither For Nor Against LD 2224. This bill is a result of the LD 1375 study group which examined regulatory barriers to housing construction. We appreciate the focus and dedication of this Committee and for making housing a priority as our state continues to navigate availability and affordability challenges. We understand that as written, LD 2224 encompasses certain provisions that were unanimous out of the study group.

As we have seen in recent years, the cost of new housing along with regulatory fees comprises an average of 24%-40% the overall cost to develop residential housing ([nahb.org/](https://www.nahb.org/)<https://www.nmhc.org/2022>). This has proven to be a significant factor slowing the pace at which Maine has been able to produce new housing units. We also understand development challenges did not result from one single policy concern but rather a combination of factors, including but not limited to, complex local and state regulations, supply chain constraints, workforce shortages, inflation, and having the oldest housing stock in the country.

We support an examination of building codes and share in the sentiment that it has a direct vein into housing production costs. A deeper dive into the financial impact that certain design requirements have and how those vary depending on residential property type and municipal location would better inform policymakers prior to implementing any recommended changes. However, we feel this could be taken one step further. We have long supported consumer choice and a property owner’s ability to choose the best option as it relates to preferences, financial impact and safety. Mandatory requirements add to the cost of new construction, development, and ownership of residential and commercial property as housing affordability and availability concerns have continued to grow in recent years.

Furthermore, one component of this bill would direct the Department of Public Safety, Office of the State Fire Marshal to convene a working group to study the housing and life safety impacts of residential fire sprinklers and explore ways to lower associated costs. We have seen that municipal-level sprinkler requirements have added significantly to the cost of housing. Particularly in municipalities with sprinkler requirements for single family housing, we have seen development stagnation and increasing concerns about installation, maintenance and insurance costs. Therefore, we recommend the committee and proposed working group consider prohibiting municipalities from requiring residential sprinklers in



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single-family homes. Consumer demand can drive this decision. If consumers want sprinklers in their new homes, they can contract for those independently without mandates.

For multi-unit buildings, we align with our partners in housing across the state to encourage more readily available elevator models and single stair egress construction. Both would provide cost effective, yet safe options to development.

Housing policy is complex, and we appreciate the support for housing legislation that streamlines and makes development feasible. LD 2224 is a positive step toward achieving development reform but we encourage continued review to consider immediate action which would reduce regulations that limit the pace with which Maine needs to build more housing. Reducing cost and allowing more options will provide incentive and opportunity, which is how our market will replenish and thrive.

We are supportive of the current momentum to enact change as it relates to housing and we are always available to continue the conversation as we navigate how to meet the housing needs of Maine for today and tomorrow. Thank you for your time and consideration.