

Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety
Maine Legislature
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: Opposition to LD207 "An Act to Transfer Responsibility for Administering the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code from the Department of Public Safety, Office of the State Fire Marshal to the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation" and "Resolve, to Direct the Department of Public Safety to Examine the Responsibilities, Fees, and Duties of the Technical Building Codes and Standards Board"

Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of MBOIA (Maine Building Officials and Inspectors Association) I am here today in opposition to LD 207. MBOIA is a nonpartisan Professional Association of over 50 years that has 340 professional members consisting primarily of certified building officials representing all areas of the state of Maine. We are the subject matter experts regarding the administration of the building code in the state of Maine. Along with responsibilities of the building codes, we also enforce State statutes has adopted by our local municipalities. In all their 14 different areas the code enforcement officers need to be certified in cover all aspects of their duties. As an enforcement branch, we feel it is necessary for us to try to separate ourselves from some of the political aspects with which we work. For this reason, we do not often come forward to interject into the process. I hope that the members of this committee will take our concerns to Heart.

The code enforcement program has been moved around the several times since the beginning of the adoption of the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC) in 2010. Each time the program moved the purpose and the funding for the program were changed. Each of these changes made it difficult to impossible for the program to provide any training for adequate training for cut officials around state.

During these early days MBOIA approached the state and offered to be a training partner. Training programs were put together with state providing funding for the instructors and MBOIA provided a location. MBOIA also provided much needed training for code officials that quite simply was not being provided by these state ' programs'. In 2019, the position of the state of Maine Building Official was created. With this position, the program made another move, but we believe it was a move in the right direction. The creation of this position provided a director of the program that had expertise, experience, and a history of Code Enforcement community.

This program began with no budget. The program funding was supposed to be taken from fees associated with the plans review of permits issued from this office. Due to lack of funding, Department of Public Safety initially absorbed much of this cost. In addition, the object of revamping inadequate training, testing, and certification programs were needed. And to make it even more interesting, COVID-19 added additional challenge.

Building construction has changed over the last 50 years. Advances in materials and techniques has taken it from a trade to a science. We also ask our buildings to do more. Whether it be what and how our buildings are made of, to the type of stuff we put in our homes, to the amount of stuff we put in our homes, a small fire can grow and becomes out of control in a matter of minutes, producing smokes and

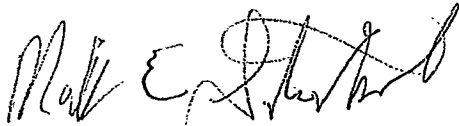
gases that can render its inhabitants unconscious. We also ask our buildings to be more energy efficient. In regards to insulation and ventilation a delicate balance must be created. If this is not done correctly the results can affect air quality and/or the sustainability of a building.

These are just some of things that are code enforcement officers are expected to know, and to teach the building contractors and design professionals, and the public. Disruption of a training system that is just beginning to hit its stride will once again work against those gains made.

In conclusion, the initial bill submitted was a red flag that still another relocation of the Maine Building Official and the programs that they provide would again set back the progress made. Our concern with the resolve is just another way to make this happen.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark C. Stambach', written in a cursive style.

Mark C. Stambach
President MBOIA