



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, I am Representative Joshua Morris and I represent the people of Leeds, Turner, and Wayne. I am here today to present LD 207, rather than read the long title; I will instead address the amendment that I am presenting in its place.

The amendment turning this bill into a study of the Building Technical Codes and Standards Board came out of a conversation with stakeholders including Fire Marshall Richard McCarthy. I thank them for the engagement and the suggestion.

As you are no doubt aware, Maine is dealing with a housing crisis, both in terms of affordability and attainability. If we are serious about addressing these issues, we must also look at state regulations such as those contained in the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC).

Last summer I was made aware that the MUBEC board was meeting and considering requiring all new homes built in Maine must have a sprinkler system. This would obviously add significant costs to building a new home. This is at a time when the cost of building materials is on the rise, not to mention the record high inflation we are experiencing. Regulations such as this will not help more families be able to achieve their dream of owning their own home.

One idea that was proposed was moving the responsibility for administering MUBEC from the Fire Marshall's office to the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation. The Office of Professional and Financial Regulation already oversees plumbers and electricians. My feeling was they would take a more holistic approach to building codes. However, as I have already said, after discussions with stakeholders, a study of the board as proposed would make more sense at this time.

District 91 Leeds, Turner & Wayne

The resolve that is before you would require a study of how we can better administer building codes by looking at whether MUBEC has the necessary resources, the timeline to adopt codes, as well as the cost/benefit analysis of the code adoption including its impact on housing costs.

This session, the legislature has appointed a joint select committee on housing. As a member of that committee, I believe it is important to look at MUBEC for ways we can reduce regulations that add to the cost of housing. If this committee decides that this bill would be better suited before the Select Committee on Housing, I will certainly welcome the bill being re-referred to them.

I thank you for considering this bill and would be happy to answer any questions you may have.