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Dear Maine State Legislators,

As President of Maine Building Officials and Inspectors Association, an organization with 375 members, I am speaking in opposition to LD 445. This bill proposes to raise the population threshold for municipal participation in the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code from 4,000 to 10,000 people. This will result in mandatory enforcement of building codes in only 4% of municipalities in Maine. Based on recent census data, 86 municipalities are currently required to enforce building codes. If this bill passes, only 22 municipalities would be required to enforce building codes. Enactment of this bill would result in a huge step backwards for our state.

Building codes are not simply regulatory hurdles—they are essential safeguards that ensure the safety, health, and well-being of the people who turn a house into a home. By removing the requirement for municipalities with less than 10,000 residents to enforce these standards, we risk exposing a large population to unsafe construction practices. Over 900,000 people in Maine currently live in municipalities with populations under 10,000, compared to just 480,000 people in municipalities with populations over 10,000. This means that by removing building code enforcement in smaller municipalities, we are effectively leaving the majority of our state's residents without the critical protections these codes provide.

While we all agree that we need to address the housing shortage in Maine, doing so at the expense of safety is a step in the wrong direction. A lack of building code enforcement does not encourage responsible, sustainable development—it opens the door to substandard housing that could create long-term social and economic costs. This bill, in its current form, is not the right answer. Instead of removing safeguards, we should be working together to find solutions that ensure quality construction in every corner of Maine. Let's focus on responsible growth that prioritizes the safety and well-being of our residents, ensuring that the homes we build today will continue to protect our communities tomorrow.

Respectfully Submitted,

Benjamin McDougal, MBOIA President

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