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Testimony of Rep. Lydia Crafts presenting

LD 659, An Act to Reduce Housing Costs by Not Requiring Fire Sprinkler Systems for Single-family Homes and Duplexes

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development

Good morning, Senator Curry, Representative Gere and members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee. My name is Lydia Crafts and I represent House District 46, which includes Bristol, Damariscotta, Monhegan Plantation, Newcastle and part of Nobleboro. Today, I am pleased to present **LD 659, An Act to Reduce Housing Costs by Not Requiring Fire Sprinkler Systems for Single-family Homes and Duplexes**.

Everyone can agree that fire safety and fire prevention are critical priorities. However, there are important considerations when mandating fire sprinklers in residential buildings. LD 659 would prohibit municipalities from adopting or enforcing building code provisions that require fire sprinkler systems in single-family dwellings and duplexes.

I recognize there may be initial hesitation about this bill, but I want to be clear: I am not seeking to compromise the safety of new houses built in Maine. Our state is experiencing a significant housing crisis, and we must make home construction accessible and affordable by eliminating barriers that increase building costs.

Fire sprinkler systems can be prohibitively expensive to install, often adding substantial costs to a project. They also require annual inspection and maintenance. As we attempt to incentivise smart, responsible development, this policy supports our statewide initiative to ensure housing is available across workforce, geographic, and socioeconomic targets.

I look forward to working with fire safety experts and stakeholders to ensure we strike the right balance between safety and affordability in our housing policies. Additionally, I am aware of one friendly amendment before you today and support the change it seeks to make in addition to this current language before you.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would be happy to answer any questions.

District 46: Bristol, Damariscotta, Monhegan Plantation, Newcastle and Nobleboro (part)