



Town of Scarborough  
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To: Housing and Economic Development Committee  
From: John S. Brennan, Deputy Fire Chief  
Date: March 5, 2025

**Re: LD 659 / HP 427: An Act to Reduce Housing Costs by Not Requiring Fire Sprinkler Systems for Single Family Homes and Duplexes**

Good afternoon,

My name is John Brennan and I am a Deputy Fire Chief for the Town of Scarborough. The Town of Scarborough has been experiencing a significant increase in new construction town wide over the past several years making us one of the fastest growing communities in Maine. Of the 54 square miles that makes up the Town of Scarborough, one third of our Community lacks public water and this includes the lack of fire hydrants in North and West Scarborough.

Removing the ability for our Town to require that all newly constructed one and two family dwellings meet the requirements of the NFPA will leave the safety of our residents in jeopardy. A residential sprinkler system provides the occupants of these homes an increased chance of survival in a world where today's building materials have created conditions where a house fire now doubles in size every thirty seconds.

I have responded to numerous house fires where a single sprinkler head would have contained the fire and allowed the safe escape for the tenants. Unfortunately, the lack of sprinkler coverage has resulted in injuries and deaths across our State from today's fast moving fire conditions.

This bill is being brought forth as a means of reducing housing costs while disregarding public safety. When I speak of public safety, I am not only speaking about the occupants of these homes but our Maine firefighters as well. The data proves that residential sprinkler systems save lives!

Today's cost to install a residential sprinkler system falls well below the cost of many other amenities that are being installed in today's homes. The safety of Maine residents does not have a price tag!

Fire Departments are stretched thin across our State as recruitment continues to be a struggle. Residential sprinkler systems provide homeowners and tenants with a measure of safety; protecting their escape path and providing them time to make it to safety while their fire departments are still responding, all be it with reduced crew sizes and from greater distances as fire departments today rely heavily on our mutual aid resources.

We need to prioritize safety and Maine LD 659, HP 427 does the exact opposite; it puts lives in greater danger.

**I strongly oppose Maine LD 659, HP 427 and recommend it not to pass!**

Respectfully,