

**Testimony Of Priscilla Ngaliema of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce**

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

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and members of the committee on Housing and Economic Development, my name is Priscilla Ngaliema. I am an intern at Maine Chamber of Commerce, and I am here on behalf of the organization, and have focused my work this semester on housing and economic development.

The Maine Chamber supports the effort to reduce housing costs by not requiring sprinkler systems for single-family homes and duplexes and believes the legislation is consistent with the recent report presented by HR&A to promote meet Maine's housing production goals. Specifically, the report outlined recommendation 1.7, "Reform State and local building codes to reduce the cost of development," which specifically mentioned sprinkler requirements and stated that the Maine should "reform State and local building codes to reduce the cost of development."

The cost savings from not requiring sprinkler systems would be significant and could ultimately lead to more homes being built. By removing the sprinkler requirement for single-family homes and duplexes, we can promote housing development without compromising the safety of residents. The current building code already includes several other safety measures that ensure the well-being of homeowners. While we urge the Committee to pass the legislation, we would also recommend that the Committee look holistically at other reforms to the building code and not this singular requirement. We do not believe the two are mutually exclusive and there should be urgency to eliminate clear burdens that do not materially enhance public safety and then tackle more challenging elements of the state's building code.

The Maine Chamber believes this approach would balance safety considerations while recognizing the urgency to lower the cost to build housing in our State. We thank Representative Crafts for introducing the legislation and we look forward to collaborating with you on exploring this important topic.