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**Testimony in Support of LD 659 (“An Act to Reduce Housing Costs by Not Requiring Fire Sprinkler Systems for Single-family Homes and Duplexes”)**

**J. Andrew Cashman on behalf of the Maine Association of REALTORS®**

**March 6, 2025**

Senator Curry, Representative Gere and members of the Joint Select Committee on Housing and Economic Development, my name is Andy Cashman. I am the Founder of Resolve Government Relations. We represent the Maine Association of REALTORS®, a professional trade association established in 1936 with over 6,500 members statewide. REALTORS® protect private property rights, build Maine communities, and grow our state’s economy. Our members represent buyers and sellers involved in both residential and commercial real estate transactions. Our membership also includes industry affiliates, such as lenders, closing agents, title agents, appraisers, building inspectors, surveyors, etc. The Maine Association is chartered by the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), the largest trade association in the country.

The Maine Association of REALTORS® supports LD 659 because it would prohibit a municipality from adopting or enforcing a building code provision that requires the installation or use of fire sprinkler systems in a single-family dwelling or duplex. One of the basic tenets of the REALTOR® Association is the protection of private property rights. While we support life safety measures, the Association opposes mandatory requirements which add to the cost of new construction, development, and ownership of property without adequate funding for the mandates and for consumer education. MAR supports the voluntary use of sprinkler systems as a fire suppressant option in protecting a property. At this time, however, the high cost of these systems present serious obstacles to building and development.

The cost of housing is escalating in many areas of Maine – well beyond what Maine working families can afford. Mandatory sprinkler systems for new construction widen the affordability gap even more. Without this bill’s protection, moving forward, developers may choose to build in other communities where these mandates are not in place. LD 659 is a step in the right direction to reduce barriers on housing development and would encourage the creation of more housing throughout Maine. We believe that LD 659 would strike the right balance for safety and affordability while providing another pathway to encouraging local housing production. For these reasons, we support LD 659 and respectfully urge you to vote Ought to Pass. Thank you for your time and consideration.



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