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2025

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Maine's Rural Development Council

**Testimony of Nancy Smith, CEO of GrowSmart Maine
in support of LD 603, An Act To Ensure That The Exemption Of Certain
Agricultural Buildings From The Maine Uniform Building And Energy
Code Includes Maple Sugarhouses**

March 11, 2025

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and Honorable Members of the Joint
Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development,

My name is Nancy Smith, I live in Ellsworth, and I am the CEO of GrowSmart Maine. We are a statewide non-partisan non-profit organization helping communities navigate change in ways that make sense in the long term. We advocate for comprehensive policies and funding for smart growth practices and outcomes.

I am intrigued by this bill, in that it combines my fifteen years advocating for smart development, with my 17 years on a family farm, and my 8 years serving on the Legislature's business committee, including when the MUBEC was originally passed.

GrowSmart testified in support of a similar bill a few years ago that provided a MUBEC exemption for agricultural barns, as seen in Section 2 of this bill. LD 603 makes sense for the same reasons; that MUBEC was not intended for such structures, and the added cost of compliance does not deliver meaningful value.

By exempting sugarhouses from MUBEC, you will ensure that capital investments for one of Maine's heritage industries are reduced, allowing property owners to keep sugar bushes in production, rather than having economics force them to consider selling for development in places where that often don't make sense in the long term.

GrowSmart Maine is willing to assist the committee in any way that is helpful.