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## **Testimony of the Maine Municipal Association**

### **In Support For**

**LD 1005 – *An Act to Allow Municipal Fire Departments with Trained Personnel to Conduct Sprinkler Plan Reviews***

**April 7, 2025**

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Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Hasenfus and distinguished members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee, my name is Rebecca Graham, and I am testifying in support for LD 1005, at the direction of MMA's Legislative Policy Committee (LPC). Our LPC is made up of individuals from across Maine with municipal officials elected by their peers across Maine's 35 Senate districts representing communities with very different access to available enforcement resources and local capacity.

When reviewing this proposed bill, municipal officials expressed a desire to adequately staff the Office of the State Fire Marshal to conduct the reviews necessary for backlogged permits and while some communities have delegated review authority for some entities, the vast majority are reliant on the office. The backlog is significant and has hindered economic development in some areas of the state. One community shared that their proximity to New Hampshire led to losing one significant economic development project to the state because of this backlog within the office.

The lack of adequate investment in the state systems that are intended to support local processes continues to be a hinderance to local development across the board but the reasons for the review remain important.

However, there was also recognition that splitting out just one element of the necessary reviews conducted by the fire marshal's office will be unlikely to relieve the backlog and may result in further delays because a developer will still be required to have different plan elements reviewed with the office. Where there is local capacity, officials welcome delegated authority but it's important to note that there are only a limited number of communities that may have this capacity locally.

Officials support mechanisms that allow municipalities to be part of the solution instead of the ones that simply devalue the regulatory need and seek to remove it. For these reasons, officials support the policy theory behind this bill but also recognize it will only apply to a narrow set of development proposals, and likely can be achieved through delegated authority processes already with limited local capacity to take up the charge.