



Glenn "Chip" Curry
Senator, District 11

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

3 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Testimony of Senator Chip Curry introducing
**LD 1375, "Resolve, to Establish a Working Group to Address Regulatory Barriers
to Housing Construction"**

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development
April 25, 2025

Representative Gere and distinguished colleagues of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development, my name is Chip Curry. I represent Senate District 11, which encompasses all 26 rural, coastal, and island communities of Waldo County. Thank you for the opportunity to present LD 1375, a "Resolve, to Establish a Working Group to Address Regulatory Barriers to Housing Construction."

This bill is grounded in a simple but pressing reality that this committee understands all too well: We are in a housing crisis. In communities across Maine, from rural to urban and coastal areas, too many people are struggling to find a safe and affordable place to live. The supply of housing hasn't kept up with demand, resulting in rising rents, soaring home prices, and too many Mainers being left behind.

LD 1375 aims to bring people together to examine closely one aspect of this challenge: the regulations that may be making it harder and more expensive to build the housing we need. This Resolve would instruct the Department of Economic and Community Development's Housing Opportunity Program to convene a working group that includes builders, engineers, planners, and other experts to evaluate our current building codes and construction regulations and make recommendations for improvements. The goal is to ensure that our rules reflect modern materials, technologies, and housing needs without compromising safety or cutting corners.

There is growing national interest in exploring how construction regulations impact housing supply and affordability. For example, a recent report from The Pew Charitable Trusts looked at whether certain longstanding building code provisions — such as requirements for multiple stairways in small apartment buildings — may unintentionally limit the construction of safe and affordable homes.¹ The report presents data suggesting that, with modern safety features like sprinklers and fire-rated materials, some of these designs may perform as well as more conventional layouts. While LD 1375 does not endorse any particular change, studies like the one from Pew underscore the importance of regularly evaluating our standards to ensure they strike the right balance between safety and cost, and that they reflect current building science and housing needs.

¹ Smith, S., & Trivedi, S. (2025, February 27). Small single-stairway apartment buildings have strong safety record. The Pew Charitable Trusts. <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/reports/2025/02/small-single-stairway-apartment-buildings-have-strong-safety-record>



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LD 1375 does not prescribe specific solutions. It sets the table for a thoughtful, inclusive process that asks the right questions: Where are our regulations adding unnecessary costs? Where do we have opportunities to align our regulations with up-to-date safety science and building practices? And how can we strike a better balance between safety, affordability, and the urgent need for more homes?

The working group's report will be due by December 31, 2025, allowing the Legislature to consider concrete recommendations next session. I hope this committee will support LD 1375 as a practical and proactive step toward expanding the housing supply in Maine.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Chip Curry
State Senator, District 11
Representing the twenty-six rural, coastal, and island communities of Waldo County