



Maine Real Estate &
Development Association

Supporting Responsible Development

In Support of LD 1375: Resolve, to Establish a Working Group to Address Regulatory Barriers to Housing Construction

April 25, 2025

Chair Curry, Chair Gere, and members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee;

On behalf of the Maine Real Estate and Development Association, please accept the following testimony in support of LD 1375: Resolve, to Establish a Working Group to Address Regulatory Barriers to Housing Construction. MEREDA's members consist of a wide range of people and organizations involved in real estate development in Maine, from architects and contractors to bankers and attorneys to developers and municipalities. Our members work together to support responsible development in Maine.

MEREDA's members heavily advocated for the initial development of the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Codes because they were facing a wide range of challenges in development across the state. Our members were finding development unpredictable, expensive in ways that did not add value to the projects or the surrounding communities, and unable to be completed in reasonable timeframes, and they continue to confront and fight the same issues today.

At a time when housing is sorely needed, Maine needs to have consistent, clear, and efficient regulations that promote responsible development that can – simply put – get done. The recent HR&A report: A Roadmap for the Future of Housing Production in Maine lays out many of the issues faced by housing developers and the communities they work in. We assume when Senator Curry proposed this bill, he envisioned a committee which would review the recommendations in the HR&A report and put forward legislation that begin to solve the issues within it. We could not agree more with that vision.

However, we would encourage the committee to consider adding specific duties to the working group, such as the charge to look at the differences between the 2021 and 2024 IECC codes, the role of sprinkler systems in the codes, and a potential delay in the effectiveness of the recently adopted 2021 I-codes in light of national and international tariffs and the Build America Buy American purchasing mandate. These significant market factors are going to make implementing the advanced I-codes a challenge for Maine housing creators. We would also encourage you to consider the current plumbing code and whether a move to the International Plumbing Code would be more appropriate for Maine.

For the reasons above, MEREDA encourages you to support a working group to review the barriers to housing development. We ask that this committee consider requiring the working group to report on each of the three approaches detailed in the report: streamlining processes and building public capacity, incentivizing production and increasing transparency, and strengthening the private sector, with laser-focus on the areas within each approach which HR&A designated as high yield and low cost.

We encourage you to support this bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Elizabeth Frazier

On behalf of Maine Real Estate & Development Association

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