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LD 2229 – An Act Regarding Municipal Inspection of the Electrical and Plumbing Components of a Manufactured Home (Emergency)

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and honorable members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee, my name is Shawn Esler, and it is a privilege to serve as Maine's State Fire Marshal. I am offering testimony in **support** of LD 2229, while also offering a technical observation for the Committee's consideration.

Manufactured housing plays an important role in addressing Maine's housing shortage. Reducing unnecessary delays in the installation and occupancy of these homes is a goal shared by many stakeholders. When inspection responsibilities are duplicative or unclear, projects can slow and costs can increase for homeowners and developers.

As written, however, the bill appears to remove municipal inspection authority for electrical and plumbing installations once the unit is placed at its final location. While factory-installed components are already inspected during the manufacturing process, several critical elements of electrical and plumbing systems are completed or connected on site. These may include electrical service connections, water supply connections, septic or sewer tie-ins, and in some cases heating or water-heating equipment. These site installations are typically inspected locally to ensure safe integration with the property's infrastructure.

While not under the jurisdiction of the Fire Marshal, a simple example is a septic system. The septic tank itself, the connection to the home, and the leach field may all require inspection before or after the unit arrives on site. Clarifying that municipal inspection authority continues to apply to on-site installation and utility connections, while avoiding duplication of factory inspections, would help prevent confusion in the field.

In closing, we support the goal of LD 2229 to streamline the manufactured housing installation process and reduce delays that affect housing availability in Maine. With a few clarifying adjustments to ensure that site-installed systems continue to receive appropriate inspection and oversight, the bill can both improve efficiency and maintain the public safety protections Maine residents expect. We ask you to consider the language proposed by the Maine Office of Community Affairs.

I would be happy to answer any questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shawn Esler'.

Shawn Esler, State Fire Marshal