

February 27, 2025

Re: LD 455 An Act to Stimulate Housing Production by Increasing the Threshold Before Participation in the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code Is Mandatory

Greetings Senator Curry, Representative Gere and Members of the Committee on Housing and Economic Development,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed change in the enforcement threshold of the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC) from municipalities with a population of 4,000 to those with 10,000 or more. This change would have significant negative consequences for the safety, economic stability, and long-term sustainability of Maine communities.

First and foremost, weakening MUBEC enforcement would compromise public safety. Building codes exist to ensure that structures are constructed to withstand the environmental conditions of our state, including harsh winters, high winds, and flooding risks. By raising the enforcement threshold, thousands of residents in small and mid-sized municipalities would be left without the protections provided by standardized codes, increasing the likelihood of unsafe and substandard construction.

The attached photos illustrate issues found at a job site where the contractor had stated everything was ready for inspection and up to code. These images serve as a clear example of why proper enforcement is necessary. Without MUBEC oversight, situations like this will only become more common, leaving property owners to deal with costly repairs and safety hazards.

Additionally, the economic impact of this change could be detrimental to Maine's housing market and workforce. Consistent building codes create a level playing field for contractors and developers, ensuring fair competition, and reducing liability risks. Without MUBEC enforcement, inconsistencies in construction standards will emerge, leading to potential devaluation of properties in municipalities that no longer enforce the code. Furthermore, homebuyers and businesses seeking to invest in Maine may be deterred by the uncertainty of varying standards across different towns.

This issue is further compounded by the fact that Maine does not currently require general contractors to be licensed. Without licensing requirements, there is already minimal oversight to ensure that contractors have the necessary skills and knowledge to build safe, code-compliant structures. If MUBEC enforcement is further weakened, it will create an even greater risk of

poor construction practices going unchecked, leaving homeowners vulnerable to structural failures, costly repairs, and potential legal disputes. Instead of rolling back enforcement, Maine should be strengthening protections for residents by ensuring that all contractors are properly trained and licensed.

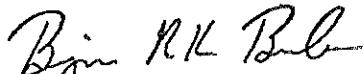
From an environmental and energy efficiency standpoint, this proposal also presents serious concerns. MUBEC includes critical energy efficiency standards that help reduce heating and electricity costs for homeowners and businesses. Weakening these standards would not only increase long-term expenses for residents but also hinder Maine's efforts toward sustainability and reducing energy consumption.

Lastly, raising the enforcement threshold would create long-term disparities between large and small communities. While larger municipalities would continue to benefit from standardized, safe, and efficient construction practices, smaller towns—many of which are already struggling with infrastructure challenges—would be left behind. This move could exacerbate the rural-urban divide and hinder efforts to create sustainable, resilient communities statewide.

For these reasons, I urge policymakers to reject any effort to weaken MUBEC enforcement by raising the population threshold. Ensuring that all Maine residents, regardless of the size of their community, have access to safe, energy-efficient, and high-quality buildings should remain a top priority.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,



Benjamin N.K. Breadmore
Town Manager & Chief Building Official
Town of Holden, Maine



