

Justin Brown
Town of Falmouth
LD 445

State of Maine Legislature – LD 445 (HP 299) Public Hearing Comments from Justin Brown

Good afternoon Legislators,

I want to thank you all for the opportunity to speak on this item. My name is Justin Brown, and I have been a Code Enforcement Officer in the Town of Falmouth for approximately 19 years. I am speaking here today in opposition of LD 445 which is proposed to change the threshold for required enforcement of the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code, or MUBEC, from communities with a population of 4,000 or greater to communities with a population of 10,000 or greater. This proposal would drastically reduce the number of communities in the state required to enforce these requirements.

The introduction to this proposal reads:

“An Act to Stimulate Housing Production by Increasing the Threshold Before Participation in the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code Is Mandatory.”

The way this LD introduction is written two things stand out to me:

First, MUBEC, is mandatory statewide regardless of a community’s obligation to enforce. In other words, any builder in the state of Maine is required to construct a home to MUBEC requirements. The requirement to enforce MUBEC is the only thing that is currently optional in communities that have a population of less than 4,000. I bring this up primarily because, while the language itself is clear, I did not feel that this description made that fact clear.

Second, while it is difficult to deny the need for more housing statewide, I fear that this proposal, which is put forth as a potential to stimulate housing, may result in a decrease in safe housing without substantially increasing housing production in any meaningful way. My experience has been that construction projects that are significantly delayed in the permitting or inspection process are most often delayed because the project does not meet, or cannot be demonstrated to meet, the mandatory requirements of MUBEC. In my opinion, removing oversight is unlikely to result in any significant time savings in the build process and it is much more likely that any increased stimulation of housing production is likely going to be at the cost of safety.

In summary, I do not think that requiring fewer communities to enforce the mandatory code will result in significant stimulation of housing production and will ultimately undermine the effectiveness of MUBEC.

Thank you for your time.

Justin Brown

Code Enforcement Officer
Town of Falmouth
www.falmouthme.org
jbrown@falmouthme.org
PH: 207-699-5306