

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

Thank you for taking the time to consider this testimony. My name is Helen Lloyd, and I am a student at College of the Atlantic in Bar Harbor. I strongly urge you to vote **ought not to pass** on LD 445.

I have focused my studies on energy and building science and spent last summer in Washington County working with the Passamaquoddy Tribe and the City of Eastport to provide free home energy audits to local residents. The goal of these audits was to identify ways to make homes more affordable to heat and cool, safer to live in, and more comfortable. Unfortunately, most of the houses we audited were the exact opposite—unsafe, uncomfortable, and extremely expensive to heat.

Enforcing the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code is essential to keeping Maine homes safe and livable. The code ensures that the homes we build are not just turning a quick profit for investors and builders but are an investment in the future of this state. A house built in compliance with the code is more efficient, safer, and built to last.

While there is a significant need for housing development in both rural and urban Maine, expanding exemptions from the building code is merely a **band-aid solution**. If we do not ensure that the houses we build now are well-constructed, then in 10 to 20 years, we will again face a housing crisis—especially in rural areas. If this bill passes, only 22 out of Maine's 482 municipalities will still be required to comply with the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code. This means there would be no guarantee that houses built in the remaining 460 municipalities would adequately serve their inhabitants—both now and in the future.

As a state with a limited workforce and economic capacity, we must build every new house as well as we can. We simply **cannot** afford to construct buildings that will not last. The Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code is a crucial tool to achieve this standard across the state. For these reasons, I strongly urge you to vote **ought not to pass** on LD 445.

Thank you,

Helen Lloyd