



Maine Real Estate &  
Development Association

Supporting Responsible Development

## In Support of LD 659, An Act to Reduce Housing Costs by Not Requiring Fire Sprinkler Systems for Single-family Homes and Duplexes

March 6, 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 659, An Act to Reduce Housing Costs by Not Requiring Fire Sprinkler Systems for Single-family Homes and Duplexes. MEREDA believes LD 659 represents the kind of small step critical action that this committee can take to effectuate real affordability in the housing market.

As a general matter, sprinkler systems add significant cost to housing construction. In the case of sprinkler systems in building not hooked up to public water and sewer, that cost becomes substantially more dramatic. Systems that run off a well require additional components such as pressure tanks or pumps to ensure water pressure and flow, adding to the already high cost of a sprinkler system.

It is also not well known that sprinkler systems must undergo regular and routine maintenance to keep them functioning efficiently. Maintenance and repair of a well-based system is substantially more expensive than one running off public sewer and water. Depending on the homeowner's insurance policy, regular repairs and maintenance could be a requirement of coverage – failure to keep up with that maintenance or other requirements could then lead to a denial of coverage. This is a substantially added long-term burden to the homeowner.

Adding a sprinkler system is a minimum \$20k proposition for any building with one or more dwelling unit. That would include properties on public water and sewer. The cost for well installation is highly customized to the type of well and property but can range as high as \$60k if new pipes or a new well must be constructed.

There can be little doubt that an effective, properly maintained sprinkler system is a fire deterrent. However, as more and more Mainers face homelessness or a dramatic loss of economic opportunity due to housing costs, we must balance the practical benefits of single family and duplex sprinkler systems with the undue burden associated with their installation.

We believe LD 659 is an appropriate step in this delicate balancing act toward ensuring more attainable and affordable housing creation. MEREDA urges the HED Committee to support this legislation.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.

Elizabeth Frazier

On behalf of Maine Real Estate & Development Association

[efrazier@pierceatwood.com](mailto:efrazier@pierceatwood.com)