

| Recent Sprinkler Costs 2023-2025 , Backyard ADUs Construction Projects | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---|---|
| | Construction Year | Number of Units | Total Square Footage | Sprinkler Cost | Water Upgrade Cost: | Sprinkler Only Cost/Ft2 | Total Cost/ft2 Including Required Water Service Upgrades: | Per unit cost including water upgrade costs |
| Dougherty Commons D4 | 2025 | 4 | 4,752.00 | \$38,790.00 | \$0.00 | \$8.16 | \$8.16 | \$9,698 |
| Dougherty Commons D5 | 2025 | 16 | 14,256.00 | \$76,265.00 | \$0.00 | \$5.35 | \$5.35 | \$4,767 |
| 18 Central Ave (3 Units) , Peaks IS | 2025 | 3 | 3,230.00 | \$41,255.00 | \$7,000.00 | \$12.77 | \$14.94 | \$16,085 |
| 0 Knickerbocker Lane, Peaks, IS | 2025 | 1 | 995.00 | \$21,000.00 | \$0.00 | \$21.11 | \$21.11 | \$21,000 |
| 92 Luther Street, Peaks IS, ME | 2024 | 1 | 885.00 | \$11,000.00 | \$0.00 | \$12.43 | \$12.43 | \$11,000 |
| 70 Skylark Road, Portland, ME | 2024 | 1 | 1,061.00 | \$14,000.00 | \$0.00 | \$13.20 | \$13.20 | \$14,000 |
| 25 Motley Street, Portland, ME | 2024 | 1 | 1,114.00 | \$11,000.00 | \$0.00 | \$9.87 | \$9.87 | \$11,000 |
| 42 Codman Street, Portland, ME | 2024 | 1 | 459.00 | \$6,000.00 | \$8,000.00 | \$13.07 | \$30.50 | \$14,000 |
| 265 Stevens Ave, Portland, ME | 2024 | 1 | 600.00 | \$8,000.00 | \$8,000.00 | \$13.33 | \$26.67 | \$16,000 |
| 141 Dorothy Street, Portland, ME | 2023 | 1 | 820.00 | \$13,000.00 | \$0.00 | \$15.85 | \$15.85 | \$13,000 |
| Compiled by Austin Gregory, Backyard ADUs, March 2025 | | | | | | average single u | \$18.52 | \$14,286 |
| | | | | | | Average multiuni | \$12.39 | \$12,887 |

Liz Trice
Backyard ADUs
LD 659

Honorable Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of Backyard ADUs to support LD 659 to prohibit municipalities from requiring sprinklers in one and two family homes. We have actual, recent, real-world, local data that I think will convince you to agree to support the bill.

Backyard ADUs in Brunswick, ME designs and builds high-quality Net Zero-ready small homes - as ADUs, accessory dwelling units, granny flats, in-law apartments - and we've started to build small townhome and multiunit developments. We combine efficient design, modern modular construction techniques, and on-site construction to provide homes at lower prices than average. Last year we built over 40 Accessory Dwelling Units, and we will build over 70 dwelling units in the coming year. Our homes are allowing seniors to downsize and boost their income, aging parents to join their children, and homeowners to earn honest rental income. Our typical small home is a well designed, spacious 800 sf two bedroom home that costs very little to heat or maintain. We invite you to look at our website and visit our model home in Brunswick.

The current local rules requiring sprinklers on ADUs and other small homes add major costs and are a major barrier to building housing in Maine. Already, it's very difficult to build an ADU that can cash flow positive with local rents, and expenses like sprinklers often push the budget to a level where the housing doesn't get built. Sprinklers are not required by state building codes on one and two unit buildings, it's just some municipalities that choose to add the requirement.

We pulled up data from 10 projects we have built or are building in Portland, where sprinklers are required in 1 & 2 unit buildings and Accessory Dwelling units. When we add up sprinkler costs and any associated water upgrades, we are looking at an average of over \$18/ SF for single unit buildings and over \$12/sf for multi unit buildings. This adds over \$14,000 per unit to the cost of single unit buildings, and over \$12,000 per unit to the cost of multi unit buildings.

A careful look at fire death data in Maine shows that almost all deaths were in homes built before 1970.

Of the 189 fire deaths between 2012 and 2024 in Maine, 119 were in one and two family home, and after you subtract the 36 homes where the age of the home was unknown, here is the data:

86% of the fire deaths were in homes older than 1980, for reference, smoke detectors only started being required in new homes in 1979.

8% of fire deaths were in homes built between 1980-2000

5% of fire deaths were in homes built between 2000-2010.

0% of fire deaths were in homes built after 2010.

In short, we do not have data that shows fire deaths in homes built after 2010.

We think ADUs and smaller homes generally can help alleviate the housing crisis in Maine, and we don't believe that requiring sprinklers in brand new, single story, all electric new homes is a justified expense.

Please approve LD 569.

Liz Trice

Director of Policy & Partnerships, Backyard ADUs, liz.trice@backyardadus.com,
207-776-0921