



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

2 STATE HOUSE STATION
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Mark C. Cooper

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March 11, 2025

Testimony
in Support of

LD 603 An Act to Ensure That the Exemption of Certain Agricultural Buildings from the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code Includes Maple Sugarhouses

Dear Senator Curry, Rep. Gere and Members of Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development, I am State Representative Mark Cooper representing District 107, part of Windham.

I am here to support **LD 603 An Act to Ensure That the Exemption of Certain Agricultural Buildings from the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code Includes Maple Sugarhouses.**

As a maple syrup producer for over 35 years and a long time member of Maine Maple Producers Association and Southern Maine Maple Sugarmakers Association, I have an understanding of the existing laws that exempt certain Agricultural Buildings from the Maine Uniform Building and Energy codes. The codes do not clearly include Maple Sugar Houses or Maple Sugar Shacks. They are often included by many town code enforcement officers as to meeting Agricultural Building requirements but unfortunately some code enforcement officers do not.

There are approximately 600 licensed maple producers in the state plus hundreds of non-licensed hobby producers. All have some type of building structure to protect the stored sap and the product during the boiling process to meet licensing requirement. Some can be very basic, roof and walls while others may be larger and more comfortable with finished walls and insulation. Typically they are single purpose buildings used for maple syrup. In-season use would include raw sap storage before processing and the equipment used to boil and finish the maple sap to syrup. Off season use might include storage of the sap collection equipment and

District 107 Windham (part)



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often finished product from spring production. Many may have an attached shed used for wood storage.

The issue with towns that do not include maple sugar houses within the Agricultural exemptions can rapidly add up to thousands and even tens of thousands to the cost of the buildings. One of the key features to any maple sugar house is the ability to vent large volumes of steam from the building. Some of the **Maine Uniform Building and Energy Codes** require nearly airtight construction making large volumes of steam venting nearly impossible. The scope of the **Maine Uniform Building and Energy Codes** that can be applied if required by a code enforcement officer without the exemption often can put the cost of the building out of practical reach for a maple producer. The lack of clarity in the current wording is allows Code Enforcement Officers to revisit past approved and completed projects that were granted prior to the exemptions and are now revoking the previous exemption, long after completion of the project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Mark C. Cooper'.

Mark C. Cooper
State Representative