

**CITY OF LEWISTON
PLANNING & CODE ENFORCEMENT
CITY BUILDING
27 PINE STREET
LEWISTON, MAINE 04240
207-513-3125**

TESTIMONY OF THE CITY OF LEWISTON PLANNING AND CODE ENFORCEMENT DEPARTMENT
IN SUPPORT OF

LD 195 Resolve, Directing the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation to Study a Voluntary Licensing System for General Contractors for Home Improvement and Construction.

Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business:

The Planning and Code Enforcement Staff at the City of Lewiston are required to be certified by the State of Maine to enforce State Laws regarding the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC), the Plumber's Examining Board Rules and the Electrician's Examining Board Rules. Currently, the State requires that plumbers and electricians be licensed by the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation in order to perform the responsibilities of their trades. Clearly defined rules and procedures are in place should issues arise from substandard craftsmanship or inability. The staff believe that training, certification, and accountability are greatly needed in the general contracting industry and a study is a move in the right direction. We believe contractors should be licensed by mandate.

Materials and technology in the building trade is ever evolving. Contractors should be engaged in continuing education as new products emerge and code changes occur. Our only recourse now is educating contractors as we inspect and reveal code violations at the planning and building stages. If all contractors are held to the same standard the benefits to homeowners and developers will only increase.

As Code Officials, we are required to understand and be proficient in the Code, yet we are inspecting the work of contractors who may not have ever opened the codebook. There are many competent contractors working in Maine. A licensing system would further ensure opportunities for training, experience and education to occur. We strongly urge that you support this legislation.

Respectfully,

David Hediger- Director of Planning and Code Enforcement

Douglas Greene- City Planner, Deputy Director of Planning and Code Enforcement

Thomas Maynard- Building Official/ Local Plumbing Inspector

Nicholaus Richard- Code Enforcement Officer/ Local Plumbing Inspector

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Steven Lebrun- Code Enforcement Officer/ Local Plumbing Inspector

Benjamin Westman- Code Enforcement Officer

Louis Lachance- Code Enforcement Officer/ Sanitarian

James Buzzell- Land Use Planner

Kyle Sheehan- City Electrical Inspector

Linda Tripp- Administrative Assistant

Catherine Lekberg- Administrative Assistant