



Testimony in Opposition to LD 445, An Act to Stimulate Housing Production by Increasing the Threshold Before Participation in the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code Is Mandatory

**To the Committee on the Housing and Economic Development
by Jack Shapiro, Climate and Clean Energy Program Director
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Senator Curry, Representative Gere, members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee, my name is Jack Shapiro, and I am the Climate and Clean Energy Director at the Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM). NRCM is a nonpartisan membership organization that has been working for more than 65 years to protect, restore, and conserve Maine's environment, now and for future generations. On behalf of our 24,000 members and supporters, NRCM testifies in opposition to LD 445, *An Act to Stimulate Housing Production by Increasing the Threshold Before Participation in the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code Is Mandatory*.

This bill would eliminate the enforceability of building codes for towns in Maine with populations between 4,000 and 10,000 residents. If this bill were to be enacted, as few as 22 of the nearly 500 municipalities in Maine would benefit from new buildings being required to be built to modern building standards.

Building low-quality buildings is not the answer to Maine's housing needs. Building codes ensure that new homes are designed with better insulation, energy-efficient heating and cooling systems, and improved ventilation. These standards help avoid common issues that arise without them, such as poor thermal integrity and leaks, inefficient energy use, and indoor air quality problems. Building without standards leads to homes with higher energy costs for occupants and potential health risks due to inefficiencies in the building envelope and mechanical systems.

Mainers already suffer from high energy burdens, largely because of the high and volatile costs of fuels like heating oil and propane for heating, gasoline and diesel for transportation, and natural gas for power generation. Building housing that does not meet modern building codes mean Maine households will pay more for energy for the life of the building, and their homes will heat up faster during a heat wave and lose heat faster during cold weather in the event of a power outage.

For health, efficiency, and cost reasons, Maine's building codes should be strengthened, along with the provision of additional resources for towns to implement and enforce them. Not functionally eliminated for scores of communities across the state already facing high energy burdens.

We respectfully urge the Committee to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 445.

Thank you.