

OPPOSE

LD 1120: An Act To Repeal the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC)

Sponsor: Senator DAVIS of Piscataquis

LD 1191: An Act To Remove the Municipal Mandate To Enforce MUBEC

Sponsor: Senator THIBODEAU of Waldo

LD 1093: An Act Regarding the Municipalities to Which the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code Applies

Sponsor: Representative HIGGINS of Dover-Foxcroft

Summary: The first bill would repeal the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC) which includes minimum energy efficiency standards for new homes and commercial buildings. The second bill would make MUBEC optional, with no requirement for it to be enforced. The third bill would further weaken the “statewide” code by exempting an additional 20 medium-sized towns from MUBEC.

Explanation: Maine's Uniform Building and Energy Code was adopted in 2008 with bipartisan support because it will help Maine people save money on energy bills. MUBEC was strongly supported by the building industry because it replaced a patchwork of local codes that have been confusing, time-consuming, and expensive for Maine builders and developers. Prior to MUBEC there was no statewide energy efficiency standard for new homes and commercial buildings, leading to many new homes in Maine being built with inadequate insulation and air sealing. Implementation of the code was projected to save Maine homeowners and businesses more than \$100 million in energy costs over the next 10 years, with the average Maine homeowner of a newly built home reaping *net* savings of more than \$200 per year.

In 2011, the Maine Legislature significantly weakened MUBEC by making the code only apply in about half the state—in towns with populations over 4,000. Maine is now the only state east of the Mississippi River and one of only 10 in the country that doesn't have a statewide energy code.

Repeal of MUBEC would result in increased energy costs for Maine people by eliminating a minimum energy code requirement in the remaining half of the state where MUBEC still applies. We would be left with a voluntary statewide energy code, which amounts to no code at all, because there would be no requirement or enforcement. Before the MUBEC was enacted, only 15% of new Maine homes were meeting baseline energy efficiency standards. Efforts to eliminate or reduce enforcement would also undermine the code.

Despite the title of one of these bills, MUBEC actually provides town a high degree of flexibility and does not mandate any single enforcement mechanism. MUBEC establishes a *minimum* standard, appropriate for all homes, to protect new homebuyers. MUBEC has broad support from Maine's construction industries, including from the Maine Homebuilders Association, Maine Real Estate & Developers Association, Associated General Contractors, and Retail Lumber Dealers, as well as many others.

Maine's building and energy code saves money, reduces oil dependence, protects consumers, and streamlines regulations for builders and developers. The code should be protected and expanded to cover the entire state.

NRCM OPPOSES Bills to weaken or repeal MUBEC