

Building Codes and Offsite Construction in Maine

Webinar

November 2, 2026

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Maine Office of Community Affairs

Agenda

9:00 AM	Welcome
9:10	Lay of the Land: Overview of Code Adoption Process, MUBEC, and Technical Standards
9:15	International Code Council Presentation
9:50	Participant Feedback Session
10:20	Next Steps & Closing
10:30	Adjourn

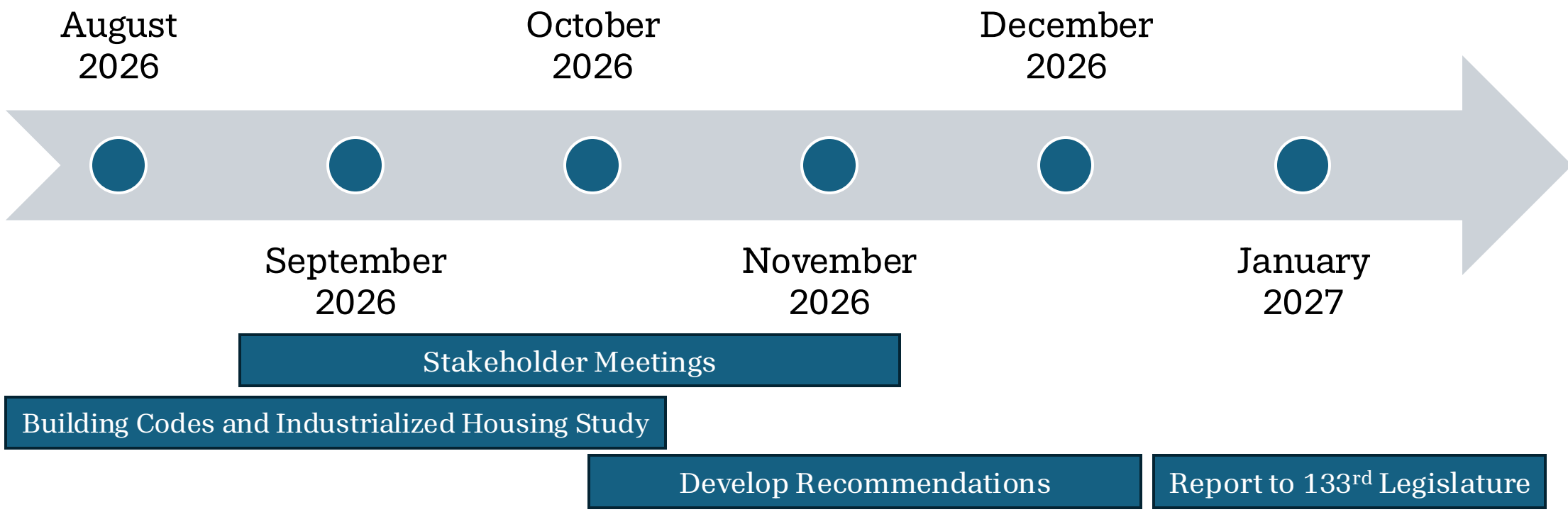
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The **Manufactured Housing Board** was replaced by the **Manufactured Housing Program** at the Maine Office of Community Affairs (MOCA) on July 29, 2026.

Project Goals:

- **L.D. 364** directed MOCA to rewrite Maine's manufactured housing laws and rules to:
  - Better position Maine to increase the supply of manufactured housing
  - Balance and protect the rights and responsibilities of manufactured community residents and owners
- We also want to better understand the costs and savings of modern and resilient building codes

Project Timeline



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Upcoming Meeting

Thurs 11/12, 2:00-4:00PM

Modular Pods, Panels, and Tiny Homes Discussion

In-person workshop at Roux Institute in Portland

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Additional meetings may be scheduled and will be listed on the MOCA Manufactured Housing Program website.

Ways to Participate

Sign up for manufactured housing email list: mailchi.mp/maine/manu_housing

See public meetings at www.maine.gov/moca/programs/manufactured-housing-program

Email manuhousing.moca@maine.gov with comments or questions.

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Code Adoption and Technical Standards in Maine

Overview of the Current Landscape

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The Code Adoption Process

Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC)

- Does NOT currently apply to 1-2 unit modular or HUD-code homes
- Made up of ICC, ASHRAE, and ASTM codes adopted by the Technical Building Codes and Standards Board, with amendments as required to best fit Maine's needs
- Adopted codes must not be more than one edition behind the most recent version

Current Code Landscape

- When 2027 codes are published, the Board will begin adopting the next versions
- At the same time, we are considering changing the codes for offsite construction (currently based on 2015 International Residential Code)
- This presents a **key opportunity to streamline**

Presentation from International Code Council

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MAINE CODES & OFF-SITE CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM STUDY

Findings & Recommendations from a Study of Maine's Building Code Program

Summary Briefing

Prepared for the Maine Office of Community Affairs

International Code Council | November 2, 2026

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STUDY SCOPE

Four questions shaped the study

The research examined how Maine can keep codes aligned while expanding pathways for off-site construction.

01 **What approaches can be effective in ensuring building code updates are aligned with updates to other relevant codes, standards and statutes?**

02 **What are common cost-benefit approaches jurisdictions use in the consideration of code updates?**

03 **How are building codes developed and adopted for off-site construction, particularly if there are any differences with site-built construction code requirements?**

04 **What other opportunities or challenges exist to advancing the off-site construction program in the state?**

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EXECUTIVE TAKEAWAY

The challenge is coordination—not a lack of tools

Maine already has the codes, standards, and regulatory tools.

What it lacks is a dependable mechanism to keep related requirements current, aligned, and ready to implement together.

OUT-OF-DATE

Requirements can lag the national cycle.

INCONSISTENT

Related codes can point to different editions.

UNPREDICTABLE

Training, approvals, and investment become harder to plan.

Aligning timelines, coordination and processes present a high-leverage reform opportunity.

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RECOMMENDED DIRECTION

A three-part policy package addresses the root cause

01

Synchronize

Put model-code adoptions on one statewide cycle and common effective date.

02

Clarify governance

Centralize adoption responsibilities and establish cost-benefit procedures.

03

Modernize delivery

Apply MUBEC to off-site construction and widen access through standards, reciprocity, and pre-approved plans.

Together, the package improves safety, predictability, and housing delivery—without removing state or local oversight.

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One building sector is operating on many clocks

Electrical (OPOR)
Reliable 3-year cadence

Fuel gas code (OPOR)
Reliable 3-year cadence

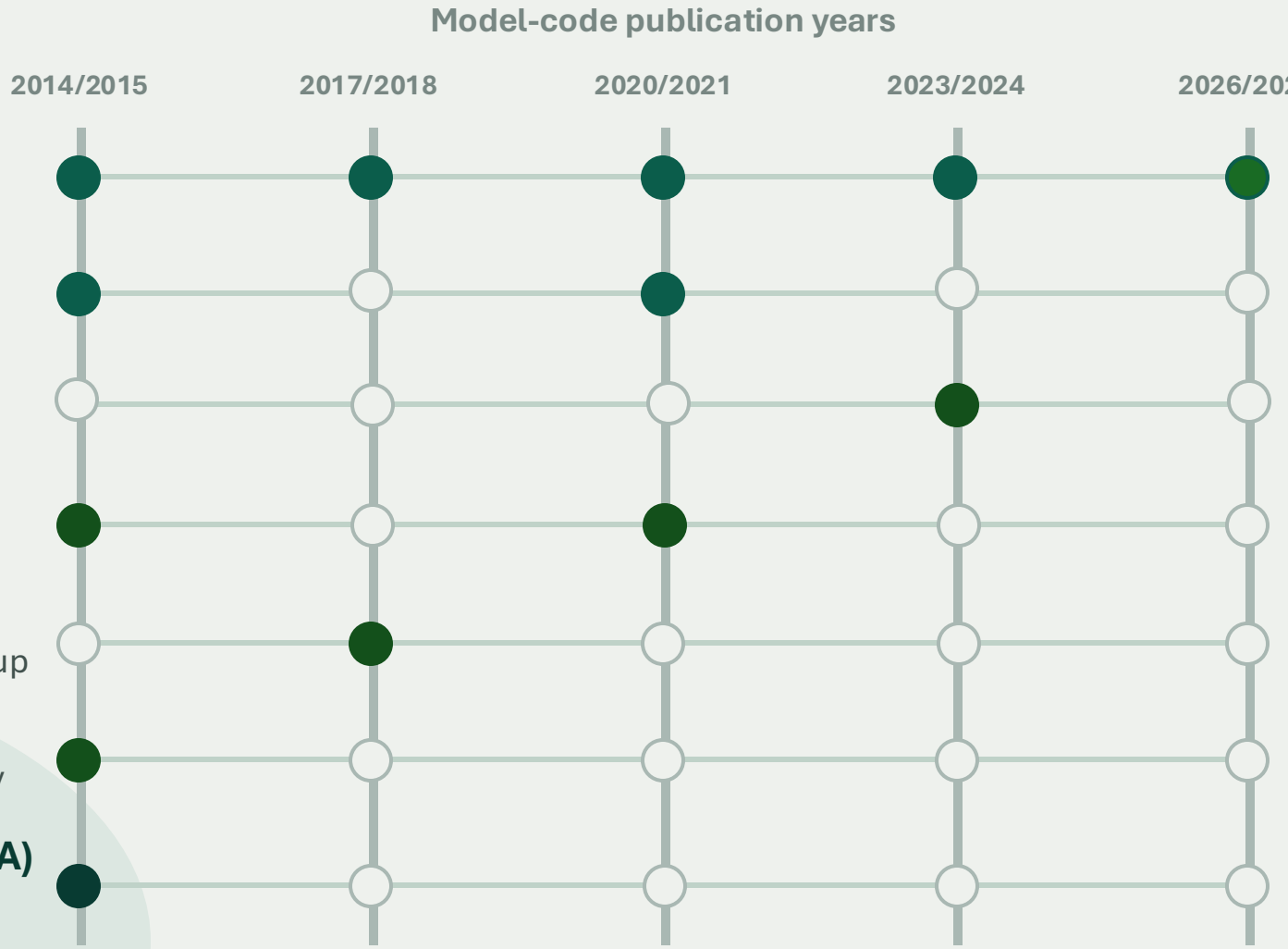
Boiler code (OPOR)
Prior update in 2005

MUBEC (MOCA)
2018 edition skipped

Fire / life safety (SFM)
Episodic multi-edition catch-up

Elevators (OPOR)
2013 → 2022 update underway

Modular housing (MOCA)
Own static references



Most national code families already share a three-year rhythm.

The misalignment is largely a state capacity, priority, and accountability issue.

POLICY ACTION 1

Synchronize the cycle—and make implementation predictable

PUBLISH

Model codes

National 3-year cycle

REVIEW

12–18 months

Cross-code analysis + rulemaking

TRAIN

One transition

Coordinated materials and outreach

EFFECTIVE

July 1

Common statewide date

Illustrative convergence: 2027 I-Codes + 2027 UPC + 2026 NEC → July 2028

Set the clock

Anchor adoptions to one statewide cycle.

Include plumbing

Add a “latest or prior edition” requirement.

Review static references

Make radon and other fixed references a recurring agenda item.

Fund implementation

Resource broad MUBEC training, not only licensed trades.

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POLICY ACTION 2

Governance has a preferred path and a workable fallback

PREFERRED PATH

Centralize adoptions

- **Move adoption:** plumbing, electrical, boiler, elevator, and fuel-gas codes to MOCA / the MUBEC Board.
- **Expand MUBEC Board:** assure necessary expertise and representation.
- **Refocus boards:** retain licensing expertise while centralizing code correlation and timing.

FALLBACK PATH

Create a standing council

- **Convene:** MOCA, MUBEC, trade boards, CDC, OPOR, and the State Fire Marshal.
- **Produce:** one adoption calendar, pre-rulemaking crosswalks, transition rules, and joint communications.

In either path: conduct a focused fire and life-safety alignment study.

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Four approaches trade analytical rigor for speed and capacity

The study examined nine states, the International Codes, and federal methods.

LOWER PROCESS BURDEN

HIGHER PROCESS BURDEN

01

Informative disclosure

Documents costs and benefits; no numeric threshold or adoption barrier.

FL • RI • OR • I-Codes

02

Technical stringency

Tests equivalent-or-better performance rather than economic return.

TX energy code

03

Procedural / analytical

Requires analysis or concurrence, but not a prescribed benefit-cost result.

NC • PA • WA

04

Substantive economic

Makes cost-effectiveness a legal precondition to adoption.

CA • MI • 2030 IECC

Key design question

Match the level of analysis to Maine's fixed update timetable, available resources, and need for consistent information.

Cost-benefit review should inform decisions—not stall the cycle

STRONG / FIXED UPDATE CLOCK

LIGHT OR EARLY ANALYSIS

HEAVY OR SUBSTANTIVE

RECOMMENDED FOR MAINE

Predictable cadence

Informative disclosure; preset assumptions; proponent analysis; targeted deeper review.

Works only with funded capacity

Rigorous recurring analysis can fit a fixed cycle only with staff, methodology, and contractor support.

Low burden, limited forcing effect

Useful information, but the code can still drift without an update clock.

Highest risk of delay

Heavy review plus no clock can become a reason not to update.

WEAK / NO FIXED CLOCK

Use DOE/PNNL support when available; define a method and procurement fallback when it is not.

Treat off-site construction as a delivery system—not a niche



EXPAND THE PROGRAM'S SCOPE

Apply MUBEC to all off-site construction

- **Add expertise:** include modular representation on the MUBEC Board.
- **Expand covered buildings, components:** include commercial buildings, closed panels and pods under the state program.
- **Align licensure:** extend the in-factory exemption to covered multifamily and commercial work where QA systems provide equivalent assurance.
- **Adopt ICC/MBI 1205:** add the regulatory-compliance standard alongside Maine's existing adoption of ICC/MBI 1200.

A CONCRETE GAP

Currently, two different codes apply in the same community

SITE-BUILT HOME

MUBEC baseline

Residential	2021 IRC
Electrical	2026 NEC
Plumbing	2021 UPC

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STATE-CERTIFIED MODULAR

Modular program baseline

Residential	2015 IRC
Electrical	2017 NEC
Plumbing	2015 UPC

Two vintages can govern homes on adjacent lots—then converge at the same municipal office.

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MANUFACTURER PERSPECTIVE

Why manufacturers may seek a different modular code

The concerns are real implementation questions—but they do not necessarily require a different safety baseline.

01 **First-cost and competitiveness**

Newer requirements may increase material, equipment, or engineering costs.

02 **Factory-specific engineering**

Transport, module connections, and closed construction may not map cleanly to every prescriptive provision.

03 **Repeatable product platforms**

A code transition can trigger re-engineering and reapproval across multiple models and production lines.

STUDY CONCLUSION

Same code baseline. Tailored compliance path.

There is no evidence that updates disproportionately affect modular construction. Most states apply the state building code to off-site construction.

Address legitimate factory issues through update process, performance-based options, modular expertise on the MUBEC Board, and transparent cost review.

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Maine can widen market access with standards, reciprocity, and plans

40 states regulate off-site construction statewide

37/40
state programs include closed panels and pods

35/40
states cover commercial & residential construction

39/40
state programs allow third-party plan review and/or inspection

1 Common standards

Adopt ICC/MBI 1205 and align Maine's code baseline.

2 Targeted reciprocity

Recognize manufacturers and third-party agencies already approved under 1200/1205.

3 Pre-approved plans

Build a Maine program and consumer-facing portal on the existing modular approval system.

Result → **More manufacturers.**
Less duplicate review.
Faster pathways to approved designs.

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Five decisions can move the package forward

1. Commit to synchronized statewide update cycle and common effective date
2. Coordinate adoption responsibility or direct MOCA to convene a standing council
3. Apply informative cost-benefit disclosure
4. Apply MUBEC to off-site construction and expand program scope
5. Adopt ICC/MBI 1205 and enable standards-based reciprocity

A coordinated framework can make Maine's codes more current, transparent, and predictable—while opening more pathways to deliver housing.

Clarifying Questions?



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Participant Feedback Session

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Discussion Question

Other states take various approaches to offsite construction:

- Applying the same building codes to offsite construction and site-built homes
- Adopting nationally recognized ICC/MBI standards for offsite construction
- Relying on TPIAs for in-factory inspection and quality assurance
- Treating 3+ unit and commercial modular the same as 1-2 unit and townhouses
- Not requiring licensure for electrical and plumbing work in factories

Should Maine adopt some or all of these practices to encourage the production and use of offsite construction?

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Discussion Question

How can Maine update its code adoption process to better consider upfront and long-term costs and benefits?

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Discussion Question

How can Maine update its code adoption process to better consider upfront and long-term costs and benefits?

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Discussion Question

ICC has recommended updating the timing of other codes and standards to align with the MUBEC (e.g., electrical code, plumbing code, boiler, fuel gas, fire and life safety). Should Maine take this approach?



THANK YOU!

Sign up for public meetings/mailing list:
www.maine.gov/moca/programs/manufactured-housing-program

Additional questions/feedback:
manuhousing.moca@maine.gov

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