



97A Exchange Street, Suite 305 • Portland Maine 04101  
Phone: 207-752-1392 • Fax: 888-612-0941  
www.maineplettheat.com • feedalliance@gwi.net

May 1, 2019

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry, and Members of the Committee:

I will be brief: The testimony which you will receive this morning, from our members, is about the opportunity to revitalize what was, ten years ago, a very promising Maine industry.

Ten years ago, we had four wood pellet plants in full production, in Strong, Corinth, Athens, and Ashland. We had more pellet bulk delivery trucks on the road than any other state. Maine Energy Systems in Bethel was installing pellet boilers, with Efficiency Maine Trust's incentives, at the rate of almost one per day. With the financial assistance of federal Recovery Act funds, Maine colleges, schools, and here and there a library and a hospital were converting from fossil fuel to ' modern wood heat.

Today you will hear from our members about the opportunities we have missed since then, despite the efforts of this Committee. **Les Otten of Maine Energy Systems** will relate the steep drop-off in pellet boiler sales in Maine since the Efficiency Maine incentives were sharply reduced. There are of course two other factors in play—lower oil prices and warmer winters—but these same factors have equally impacted the other Northeast states, where installation of wood boilers has dramatically increased as result of incentives.

**Robert Linkletter of Maine Woods Pellet** in Athens has been a very active participant in both the Biomass Study Committee created by this Committee and the FORME Forestry Roadmap, where he chaired the biomass Committee. His firm is real leader in the Northeast, producing over 100,000 tons of pellets annually while also generating electricity at his state-of-the art Combined Heat and Poser site.

Rick Grondin, whose engineering firm **Integrated Energy Systems** in Falmouth has installed many wood boilers, as well as other types of heating, will speak to the efficacy of modern wood heat.



97A Exchange Street, Suite 305 • Portland Maine 04101  
Phone: 207-752-1392 • Fax: 888-612-0941  
www.maineplettheat.com • feedalliance@gwi.net

Because of the short advance notice provided for this hearing, a number of organizations have had to submit written testimony. I especially draw your attention to the information being provided by:

1. **Lignetics**, the pellet plant in Strong which has been acquired by the Lignetics national firm, by far the largest heating pellet producer in the U.S. This firm is obviously making a huge investment in Maine and is major employer and consumer of waste wood. Equally important, Lignetics advisor Charlie Niebling of Concord NH, with whom several of you are familiar because of the expert testimony provided to this Committee in past years, particularly on the complexity of Thermal Renewable Energy Credits, will be available for Committee work sessions. As you will see from the outline of wood heating incentives provided in the Lignetics testimony, Mr. Niebling is also thoroughly versed in the heating incentives provided in other Northeast states, and Maine's clear substandard position.
2. **Viessmann**, a national wood boiler firm which installed a number of large pellet boilers in Maine until the cost-sharing virtually went away.
3. **Jackson Laboratory**, our largest customer, who is well pleased with their wood pellet heating system.
4. Bill Crandall, program manager for **Western Maine Community Action**. Mr. Crandall has been a supporter of wood heat since the outset, as are the schools in Franklin County. He notes that Franklin County has experienced a much larger drop in the poverty rate than any other county in Maine, and attributes much of this to the fact that almost all that County's schools, along with the hospital, UMF, and many community buildings have transitioned from fossil fuel heat.
5. Finally, the **Northern Forest Center** in Concord NH. This outstanding nonprofit is dedicated to improving the rural economics of Northern New England and update New York, and has invested significant funds and energy into promoting modern wood heat.