MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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One Hundred and Thirty-First Legislature

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Beginning with Page H-277

sources that are most affordable for the housing that is critical to Maine people. This bill was supported by the State and Local Government Committee with unanimous Ought to Pass Report and had complete bipartisan support, but before the end of that session, politics had interfered.

Individual heating choice is essential for affordability. We can all agree that high energy costs are among the most difficult issues that are facing Mainers today. Many are struggling to pay their utility bills and are being forced to choose between other monthly costs of equal importance, like rent, mortgage, feeding their families. As inflation takes a growing bite out of our household finances of every Maine family and heating costs have gone up as a result of the global fuel constraints, a growing number of Maine people and businesses have sought to diversify their heating options, from solar panels to wood pellets to propane to natural gas. In many cases, Mainers use multiple sources of heat to heat their homes and offices that they switch among based on costs, weather and other variables. This choice is essential in making sure that Mainers can afford to heat their homes, Madam Speaker.

LD 894 helps to ensure individual choice. This bill would ensure that municipalities in Maine do not pass ordinances that directly or indirectly prohibit a consumer from choosing their own heating or energy systems. This bill safeguards that individual choice so that Mainers can continue to do what makes sense for them economically and environmentally. This bill is similar to a previous bill that is now law that prohibits municipalities from banning solar projects. So, if your argument about local control, why is it that we can pass a bill that prohibits municipalities from banning a solar project but not one from banning the heating system of one's choice?

This bill helps ensure affordable housing. Heating is a key part to the cost of building and maintaining housing in Maine and as housing prices go up, Mainers struggle to afford rent and mortgage payments; if they can find housing at all, that is. Mainers need to encourage new home construction that is affordable. Without such choice, home prices go up and up and work against the efforts to build affordable housing in Maine.

LD 894 is technology neutral. LD 894 does not promote or benefit any particular type of fuel, of heating equipment. It preserves the ability to install solar panels, heat pumps, propane heaters. Such diversification in resource is critical to addressing the short-term and long-term needs of our State and our businesses. And what they may be the most desirable or least expensive heating option. While Maine is working to electrify its heating sector, most reliable projections suggest that Maine and the region is a long way away from having enough renewable energy to electrify the heating sector, the transportation sector and then to add enough renewable energy for the current uses of electricity. At the same time, new technologies in the natural gas arena allow for renewable natural gas that can make a significant dent in existing methane emissions. Given these very real challenges facing our energy sector, the best way to ensure affordable heating and sound environmental choices is to ensure heating choice. This all-of-the-above approach is the essence of LD 894.

In closing, a recent Critical Insights poll asked Mainers if they, quote; do you believe State government should pass laws to let Mainers choose how to heat their homes and businesses, which may include electric heating systems but could also include propane, oil, solar, wood and natural gas. Our constituents voted 91% yes. For that reason, I oppose the pending motion. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Boothbay, Representative Stover.

Representative **STOVER**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Madam Speaker, LD 894 limits home rule and the ability of local communities to decide what works best for their residents. Communities should not be prohibited from setting local public health and safety standards. This bill could allow someone to install a system that is in conflict with a building design or local neighborhood. This is a reaction to actions taken in one community. If individuals do not like those actions, they should've been taken up at the local level instead of using State Law to overrule the will of the residents. The Governor's Office on Energy, municipalities and cities across Maine, the Maine Municipal Association, many environmental organizations and youth climate leaders all testified against this bill.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of the Minority Ought Not to Pass Report. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 217

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Arford, Bell, Boyle, Brennan, Bridgeo, Cloutier, Cluchey, Collings, Copeland, Crafts, Craven, Crockett, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Fay, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Graham, Gramlich, Hasenfus, Jauch, Kessler, Kuhn, Landry, Lanigan, LaRochelle, Lookner, Madigan, Malon, Mathieson, Matlack, Meyer, Millett R, Milliken, Montell, Moonen, Moriarty, Murphy, O'Connell, O'Neil, Osher, Paulhus, Perry A, Pluecker, Pringle, Rana, Reckitt, Rielly, Riseman, Roberts, Roeder, Runte, Russell, Sachs, Salisbury, Sayre, Shagoury, Shaw, Sheehan, Skold, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Williams, Worth, Zager, Zeigler, Madam Speaker.

NAY - Albert, Andrews, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Blier, Boyer, Bradstreet, Campbell, Carlow, Carmichael, Collamore, Costain, Cray, Cyrway, Davis, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Dunphy, Faulkingham, Foster, Fredericks, Galletta, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Henderson, Hobbs, Hymes, Jackson, Javner, Lavigne, Lee, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, Mastraccio, Millett H, Morris, Ness, Newman, Nutting, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Polewarczyk, Pomerleau, Quint, Rudnicki, Sampson, Sargent, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Theriault, Thorne, Underwood, Walker, White B, White J, Wood, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Adams, Hepler, Perry J.

Yes, 76; No, 71; Absent, 3; Vacant, 0; Excused, 1.

76 having voted in the affirmative and 71 voted in the negative, with 3 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the Minority **Ought Not to Pass** Report was **ACCEPTED** in concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-286)** on Resolve, to Create the Commission to Study the Operations of the Maine Legislature (EMERGENCY)

(S.P. 436) (L.D. 1067)

Signed:

Senators:

BALDACCI of Penobscot

LYFORD of Penobscot

Representatives:
ADAMS of Lebanon
GREENWOOD of Wales
POMERLEAU of Standish
RISEMAN of Harrison
UNDERWOOD of Presque Isle

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on same Resolve.

Signed:
Senator:
NANGLE of Cumberland
Representatives:
STOVER of Boothbay
ABDI of Lewiston
COPELAND of Saco
DHALAC of South Portland
PAULHUS of Bath

Came from the Senate with the Minority **OUGHT NOT TO PASS** Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED**.

READ.

Representative STOVER of Boothbay moved that the House **ACCEPT** the Minority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

Representative GREENWOOD of Wales **REQUESTED** a roll call on the motion to **ACCEPT** the Minority **Ought Not to Pass** Report.

More than one-fifth of the members present expressed a desire for a roll call which was ordered.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Wales, Representative Greenwood.

Representative **GREENWOOD**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is a study that would basically study how we operate here, ways to improve. I think maybe this Session might be an example as to, you know, with the number of bills we have, are there things we can do to help flow and improve our process. It basically asks both presiding officers to put Members on a study commission which would also include former Members, a lobbyist, et cetera. It's just a way to study maybe ways we can improve how we operate here. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The Chair recognizes the Representative from Boothbay, Representative Stover.

Representative **STOVER**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think that we all appreciate that we can do things more efficiently, more effective, that we can always find room for improvement. This bill calls to create a commission to study the operations of the Maine Legislature. We already have a Body, the Legislative Council, that oversees the Legislature and can advise to the changes that we can make to create more efficiencies for ourselves. Thank you.

The SPEAKER: A roll call has been ordered. The pending question before the House is Acceptance of the Minority Ought Not to Pass Report. All those in favor will vote yes, those opposed will vote no.

ROLL CALL NO. 218

YEA - Abdi, Ankeles, Arford, Bell, Boyle, Brennan, Bridgeo, Cloutier, Cluchey, Collings, Copeland, Crafts, Craven, Crockett, Dhalac, Dill, Dodge, Doudera, Eaton, Fay, Gattine, Geiger, Gere, Golek, Graham, Gramlich, Hobbs, Jauch, Kessler, Kuhn, Landry, LaRochelle, Lee, Lookner, Madigan, Malon, Mastraccio, Mathieson, Matlack, Meyer, Millett R, Milliken, Montell, Moonen, Moriarty, Murphy, O'Connell, O'Neil, Osher, Paulhus, Perry A, Perry J, Pluecker, Pringle, Rana, Reckitt, Rielly, Roberts, Roeder, Runte, Russell, Sachs, Salisbury, Sargent, Sayre, Shagoury, Shaw, Sheehan, Skold, Stover, Supica, Terry, Warren, Williams, Worth, Zager, Zeigler, Madam Speaker.

NAY - Albert, Andrews, Arata, Ardell, Babin, Bagshaw, Blier, Boyer, Bradstreet, Campbell, Carlow, Carmichael, Collamore, Costain, Cray, Cyrway, Davis, Drinkwater, Ducharme, Dunphy, Faulkingham, Foster, Fredericks, Galletta, Gifford, Greenwood, Griffin, Guerrette, Haggan, Hall, Hasenfus, Henderson, Hymes, Jackson, Javner, Lanigan, Lavigne, Lemelin, Libby, Lyman, Mason, Millett H, Morris, Ness, Newman, Nutting, Parry, Paul, Perkins, Poirier, Polewarczyk, Pomerleau, Quint, Riseman, Rudnicki, Sampson, Schmersal-Burgess, Simmons, Smith, Soboleski, Strout, Swallow, Theriault, Thorne, Underwood, Walker, White B, White J, Wood, Woodsome.

ABSENT - Adams, Hepler.

Yes, 78; No, 70; Absent, 2; Vacant, 0; Excused, 1.

78 having voted in the affirmative and 70 voted in the negative, with 2 being absent and 1 excused, and accordingly the Minority **Ought Not to Pass** Report was **ACCEPTED** in concurrence.

Majority Report of the Committee on **TRANSPORTATION** reporting **Ought to Pass as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-289)** on Bill "An Act to Fund the Recommendations of the Mountain Division Rail Use Advisory Council"

(S.P. 568) (L.D. 1450)

Signed:
Senators:
CHIPMAN of Cumberland
FARRIN of Somerset
Representatives:
ALBERT of Madawaska
ANKELES of Brunswick
O'CONNELL of Brewer
PARRY of Arundel
THERIAULT of Fort Kent
WHITE of Waterville
WHITE of Guilford

Minority Report of the same Committee reporting **Ought Not to Pass** on same Bill.

Signed:
Senator:
NANGLE of Cumberland
Representative:
WILLIAMS of Bar Harbor

Came from the Senate with the Majority **OUGHT TO PASS AS AMENDED** Report **READ** and **ACCEPTED** and the Bill **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED AS AMENDED BY COMMITTEE AMENDMENT "A" (S-289)**.

READ.

On motion of Representative WILLIAMS of Bar Harbor, the Majority **Ought to Pass as Amended** Report was **ACCEPTED**.

The Bill was **READ ONCE**. **Committee Amendment "A" (S-289)** was **READ** by the Clerk and **ADOPTED**.

Under suspension of the rules the Bill was given its **SECOND READING WITHOUT REFERENCE** to the Committee on **Bills in the Second Reading**.

Under further suspension of the rules the Bill was **PASSED TO BE ENGROSSED as Amended by Committee Amendment "A" (S-289)** in concurrence.
