

To Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee

Maine State Legislature

I am writing in support of the Emergency Winter Energy Relief Bill and its provisions proposed by Governor Mills. I believe this bill if enacted would provide immediate financial relief for the vast majority of Mainers who are faced with significant hardships in today's inflationary environment.

I was stunned to read that a small group of Senators opposed, and prevented, passage of what was a bipartisan effort to distribute surplus funds and federal grant funds for heating assistance to alleviate the high heating costs all Mainers currently face. The alternative proposal subsequently offered by Republican Senators is an inadequate substitution to Governor Mills' well-designed plan.

Seniors, like my wife and me, living on essentially fixed income budgets, can certainly use the one-time boost, and all the low-income Mainers who would have benefited from the \$50M assistance package can absolutely use the assistance.

To put things in perspective, we have contracted for oil and propane deliveries through an annual budget program for over 50 years. In 2021, our monthly payment was \$238. In 2022 the monthly amount increased to \$390. This heating season the monthly amount has gone up to \$709. That calculates to an increase of 198% over our cost in 2021. Our Social Security payments and retirement savings have not increased correspondingly.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Warner Price

Harpswell, ME