



Megan Hannan, Executive Director  
Maine Community Action Partnership  
176 Washington St.  
Bath ME 04530  
207-831-9893

Jason Parent, CEO/Executive Director  
Aroostook County Action Program, Inc.  
PO Box 1116  
Presque Isle, ME 04769-1116  
207-764-3721

James Martin, CEO  
Community Concepts, Inc.  
240 Bates Street  
Lewiston, ME 04240  
207-739-6553

Rebecca Palmer, Executive Director  
Downeast Community Partners  
248 Bucksport Road  
Ellsworth, ME 04605  
207-610-5904

Suzanne Walsh, CEO  
Kennebec Valley Community Action Program  
97 Water Street  
Waterville, ME 04901  
207-859-1579

Claire Berkowitz, President & CEO  
Midcoast Maine Community Action  
34 Wing Farm Parkway  
Bath, ME 04530  
207-442-7963

Joe Everett, President & CEO  
Opportunity Alliance  
50 Lydia Lane  
South Portland, ME 04106  
207-523-5055

Kara Hay, President & CEO  
Penquis  
PO Box 1162  
Bangor, ME 04402  
207-973-3500

Donna Kelley, President & CEO  
Waldo Community Action Partners  
PO Box 130  
Belfast, ME 04915  
207-338-6809

Jim Trundy, Executive Director  
Western Maine Community Action, Inc.  
PO Box 200  
East Wilton, ME 04234-0200  
207-743-7763

Carter Friend, Executive Director  
York County Community Action Corporation  
PO Box 72  
Sanford, ME 04073  
207-324-5762

**Maine Community Action Partnership Supports LD 3:  
An Act to Establish the Winter Energy Relief Payment Program to  
Aid Residents with High Heating Costs and to Finalize the COVID  
Pandemic Relief Payment Program  
December 21, 2022**

Senator Jackson, Representative Talbot Ross, ladies and gentlemen of the Committee On Appropriations and Financial Affairs, I am Megan Hannan, Executive Director of Maine Community Action Partnership, the association of the ten community action agencies in Maine and we support LD 3 "An Act to Establish the Winter Energy Relief Payment Program to Aid Residents with High Heating Costs and to Finalize the COVID Pandemic Relief Payment Program."

As we all know, heating fuel prices are at an all time high this year, and although our share of the federally funded Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP, or HEAP) is a little above last year's funding, the higher price of fuel means we can either serve fewer people with the same benefit as last year, or the same number of households will receive a lower benefit. My organization has been lucky to receive donations for supporting families who are struggling with heating costs, but the demand far outweighs the supply.

Putting \$50,000,000 in the hands of community action agencies, who are the local administrators of HEAP funds, means that many more households will be safe and warm this winter. Of that sum, \$10 million will be accessed by those who are not eligible for HEAP funds, either by being just over the income limits or having already used their HEAP benefit. We will make sure that those funds are low barrier to access and not subject to the lengthy process Federal HEAP funds require. The other \$40 million, of course, will be accessible through the regular HEAP process to assure proper distribution.

This bill also addresses our current housing crisis. The \$21,000,000 allocated in this bill will allow our emergency rental assistance program to finish payments to eligible households for the winter, averting a potential crisis of homeless families in the dead of our coldest season. We know we need a medium- and long-term solution to this problem and that this only buys us some time to address those pressing needs and we are working on that; in the meantime, we do need this bridge to assure families are safe during the winter.

Finally, this bill also puts money directly in the pockets of those who need it most. We know the simple solution to being able to eat, heat and pay bills is having money with which to do so, and this second round of relief goes a long way to doing that.

Thank you for your time and attention today. I am happy to answer any questions you have.