



Consumer Council System of Maine  
A Voice for Consumers of Mental Health Services

219 Capitol Street, Suite 7  
Augusta, ME 04330

Phone: 207.430.8300  
Fax: 207.430.8301  
Toll-Free: 877.207.5073  
[www.maineccsm.org](http://www.maineccsm.org)

December 21, 2022

Good afternoon, Senator Jackson, Representative Talbot Ross and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs,

My name is Simonne Maline. I am the Executive Director for the Consumer Council System of Maine (CCSM). I am writing on behalf of the CCSM to testify neither for nor against on **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.”**

The Consumer Council System of Maine is a public instrumentality written into State Statute by the Maine Legislature to serve in an advisory capacity and to provide legislators with guidance and advice regarding the delivery of effective and appropriate adult mental health services from those served by them.

The CCSM heartily supports helping Maine residents defray mounting heating costs but, we are opposed to the fact that a significant amount of money for this proposal is to be paid for by funds originally allocated to other needed programs such as the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) for Mainers with an intellectual/developmental disability, autism, brain injury, and other related conditions. As it stands now, it is our understanding there is a long wait list for individuals who are eligible for these services. We would urge you to look for other monetary sources to help people who are needing assistance with heating costs.

We also would ask that you be mindful of renters who have heating included, but despite that their rent has been increased significantly which puts a financial burden on them as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Simonne Maline**

Executive Director