

City of Portland | City Council

Kate Snyder, *Mayor*



To: Joint Standing Committee on Taxation
From: Mayor Kate Snyder, City of Portland
Date: 12/21/2022
Re: LD 3

**Testimony in Support of 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**

Senator Jackson, Representative Talbot-Ross, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs:

I join you today to testify on behalf of the City of Portland in support of 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 head into the winter months amid near record-high energy prices, it's important that we take measures to provide assistance to help Maine people and families stay warm, safe, and secure. If passed, LD 3 will provide relief to thousands in the city of Portland and across the state.

According to the Maine State Housing Authority, 1,070 Portland households were determined eligible for the Home Energy Assistance Program in 2022. If passed, this legislation would provide \$40 million to HEAP to help sustain that program during a time of high heating costs. Additionally, the bill contains \$21 million in emergency housing assistance to help people who are about to lose federal COVID-era rental and housing assistance. 873 Portland households were benefiting from ERA funding and could use continued assistance. City-operated shelters are at capacity; if demand for emergency shelter suddenly increases as a result of the discontinuation of this funding, we are deeply concerned for the residents who will be affected.

Portland City Council's Legislative/Nominating Committee urges you to pass this legislation to help ensure that our most vulnerable citizens are able to stay warm this winter.

Thank you for your consideration.

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