



## Windham Neighbors Helping Neighbors

Good afternoon. President Jackson, Speaker Talbot Ross, and members of the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, I am Patrick Corey and I serve as President of Windham Neighbors Helping Neighbors. I am here to speak in SUPPORT of LD3, "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". More specifically in support of Part A, Sections A-1 and A-2 and Part B. These are the provisions regarding energy assistance.

Windham Neighbors Helping Neighbors is a 501 c3 nonprofit founded in 2007 and is made up of Windham volunteers who have come together to provide one-time emergency assistance to those Windham residents who require immediate heating fuel. Resources are focused on those who have fallen through the cracks and either don't qualify or are in a bureaucratic process waiting for assistance from other entities. Windham Neighbors is funded through donations. One hundred percent of funds received go directly to the people our organization assists.

We provide heating assistance from October to April each year. From October of 2008 through April of 2022, Windham families have been served 839 times. During this time, we spent \$244,655 on 84,876 gallons of fuel oil or propane. We have also provided 6.25 cords of wood.

We would like to think that every community in Maine has an organization that acts as a backstop like ours. Sadly, that probably isn't reality. We've been at this for 15 years.

Thankfully, community businesses and residents know that their customers and neighbors may go cold this winter and have stepped up. We are grateful for their generosity. Our help only reaches those willing to accept that they need assistance and ask us to provide aid. This assistance is given confidentially.

During this 2022/2023 heating season we have seen an increased number of requests over previous years. Moreover, we are seeing requests from people that have never approached us for emergency assistance in the past. Over the past three periods starting October 1 and ending December 31, our yearly cases and costs are: 32 cases in 2019 costing \$7,897, 20 cases in 2020 costing \$4,184, and 27 cases in 2021 costing \$6,539. We point this out because thus far from October 1, 2022, through December 20, 2022, we have handled 36 cases and spent \$17,886. We still have 11 days until this month ends.

As mentioned, we provide one-time yearly emergency fuel assistance for Windham residents. This consists of 100 gallons of fuel oil or propane. We've been discussing how we can provide further assistance. Of course, passing LD3 will remove some of the burden from organizations like ours.

The 131st Maine Legislature has been given an amazing opportunity through this windfall in revenue to truly help so many Mainers. Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of my volunteer organization. Let's keep people from going cold this winter. Please support the energy assistance provisions in this bill.