

I am writing 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.

I have lived in Maine all my life except for my time in the US Army where I served as a medic in Vietnam. I grew up in Houlton, Maine, which has a longer winter than southern Maine. I raised my family in Augusta and still live in Augusta.

I was not able to attend the legislative public hearing yesterday as I am visiting my daughter in North Carolina. Here the Governor of North Carolina has declared a statewide emergency due to the forecast of colder than usual temperatures. This emergency allows truck drivers with fuel supplies to drive longer hours and moves to prevent the price gouging of heating oil and propane.

I congratulate the legislators who have brought this bill forward. The need is there, the funds are available. Let's get it done! My wife and I would be eligible for the relief but I would still support the bill if the income guidelines were lowered.

I am concerned that the bill stands to support the oil industry and I think that Maine government needs to support other sources of heating. I think that the possibility of price gouging needs to be monitored in the same way that is being done in North Carolina. This bill is tacked onto the Covid emergency which seems like a bit of a stretch. I think that the Governor of Maine could declare a heating emergency.

Sincerely,
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