

To: Members of the Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology,
From: William Weber
Date: March 30, 2023
Re: **Testimony in Support of L.D. 1101: *An Act to Support Lower Home Energy Costs by Establishing a Home Energy Scoring System***

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and the members of the Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology,

I am submitting the following testimony on behalf of the Portland Climate Action Team (PCAT), a volunteer group of greater Portland residents committed to addressing the current climate crisis. We advocate for reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Portland and promote the equitable transition from fossil fuels to clean renewable energy. To that end, we urge an “ought to pass” report on L.D. 1101: *An Act to Support Lower Home Energy Costs by Establishing a Home Energy Scoring System*.

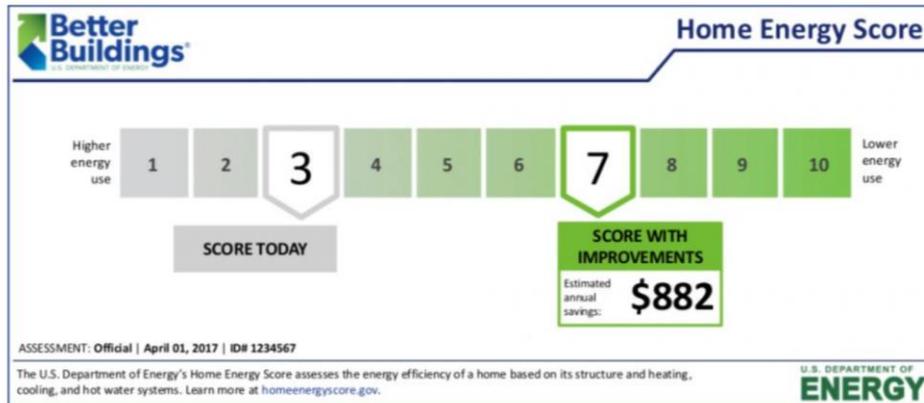
We have all become very familiar with the Energy Star labels when we go shopping for a new appliance. We are also keenly aware of the EPA mileage estimate on that new automobile we hope we can afford. These important measures protect the consumer and make them fully informed of the costs to operate the vehicle or the appliance. Those figures often can play a large role in deciding whether that car or refrigerator is really the one for you or maybe a more expensive model may be less costly in the long run.

Then isn't it odd that one of the most expensive investments that an individual can make, the purchase of a home, has the buyer in the dark relative to energy requirements? Energy costs in the United States can consume as much as 8% to 22% of a families' total after-tax income, with the poorest Americans, or 25 million households, paying the highest of that range. According to a study by [Wallet Hub](#) Maine has one of the highest costs for natural gas in the country and is 13th of the fifty states in the highest total energy cost for a household. It's important to consider energy consumption when choosing a place to live, as around 27% of American households have difficulty meeting their energy needs. A study done by [Synapse Energy Economics](#) determined that the average home energy burden in Maine for low income households is 19%.

There are numerous examples across the United States where states and local governments have developed home energy scoring systems to assist the consumer in making an informed decision on what they are buying. Efficiency Maine can easily adopt one of the many existing and successful programs. Home energy scores can help potential home buyers better understand a home's energy efficiency and how even simple improvements can mean big savings over the life of the home. An example of a simple but very informative Home Energy



Score is depicted below. The program which has been adopted by many states and municipalities was developed by the US Department of Energy [Better Buildings Initiative](#).



In addition to avoiding buyers' remorse the Home Energy Scoring System will make a significant contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Due to the large percentage of fuel oil that heats our homes in Maine residential greenhouse gas emissions are significant. Informing **potential buyers of a property's energy costs will incentivize sellers to make investments to lower the carbon footprint of the building.** That will also increase the participation in rebates and incentives.

I respectfully urge an "ought to pass" report on L.D. 1101: *An Act to Support Lower Home Energy Costs by Establishing a Home Energy Scoring System.*

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Sincerely,

William Weber
Member Portland Climate Action Team