



**Testimony in Support of LD 1101, An Act to Support Lower Home Energy Costs by
Establishing a Home Energy Scoring System
To the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee
by Jack Shapiro, Climate and Clean Energy Program Director
March 30, 2023**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and members of the Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Jack Shapiro. I am the Climate and Clean Energy Director at the Natural Resources Council of Maine. NRCM has been working for more than 60 years to protect, restore, and conserve Maine’s environment, on behalf of our 25,000 members and supporters. I’m here today to testify in support of LD 1101, An Act to Support Lower Home Energy Costs by Establishing a Home Energy Scoring System.¹

According to the Department of Environmental Protection’s 9th Biennial Greenhouse Gas report, residential buildings are responsible for 21% of Maine’s carbon emissions from fossil fuel combustion.² Maine’s Climate Action Plan includes several key strategies to reduce emissions from our buildings. These include switching to cleaner heating sources like high-efficiency cold weather heat pumps and adopting modern energy-efficient building codes, both of which are underway.³ Another key strategy in the Climate Action Plan is to “Accelerate Efficiency Improvements to Existing Buildings,” which this bill speaks to directly.

As the Climate Action Plan notes, Maine has some of the oldest building stock in the country. That, combined with the fact that our continued dependence on fossil fuels for heating and for electricity generation in the region – which is directly driving high energy prices and high energy burdens for Maine people – means that addressing efficiency in those existing buildings is key.

Energy efficiency has long been considered one of the most cost-effective ways to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. As we continue to experience high energy prices driven by fossil fuels, and the impacts of climate change arrive in Maine through more extreme weather, invasive species, and harm to some of our iconic industries, the argument for efficiency becomes even stronger.

¹ <https://legislature.maine.gov/legis/bills/getPDF.asp?paper=HP0696&item=1&snum=131>

² https://www.maine.gov/climateplan/sites/maine.gov.climateplan/files/inline-files/9th_GHG_Report_FINAL%20%282%29.pdf

³ https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/MaineWontWait_December2020.pdf

Efficient buildings use less energy, and thus cost less to heat and to keep cool as we experience more frequent dangerous heat days due to climate change – especially critical for seniors, children, and people with health conditions. Efficient buildings are more resilient during extreme weather events and power outages. And efficient buildings lower overall energy demand, easing the overall transition to electrification and renewable energy.

Energy efficiency is a rare policy that addresses both climate mitigation – that is, reducing emissions – as well as climate adaptation, reducing risks and impacts from the effects of climate change that we are already seeing and are unavoidable in the future due to the damage we have already done to the climate by burning fossil fuels.

This bill establishes a standard home energy scoring system for residential buildings in Maine, which would bring several benefits. Home energy scores provide transparency for prospective renters and buyers as to how much they would need to spend on energy. Home energy scores would incentivize and lower hurdles for home buyers and home sellers to make efficiency improvements, which not only lower costs and emissions, but increase resiliency and home values as well. Collecting anonymized home energy performance data would also give the state and municipalities the ability to make smarter policies in the future as we continue toward decarbonizing residential building sector and lowering energy costs for Maine people.

Accelerating energy efficiency improvements in residential buildings has many direct benefits. It is also necessary for us to achieve the climate and clean energy goals enacted by the Legislature. This bill will support both.

We encourage the Committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1101 and would be happy to answer any questions that you have.

Thank you.