

Maya Faulstich
Maine Youth Action
LD 2077

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Ziegler, and members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee, My name is Maya Faulstich, and I am a resident of Yarmouth ME, and a student activist with Maine Youth Action. I am testifying in support of LD 2077.

If we want to reach our climate goals, we have to stop expanding natural gas and really assess how dangerous it is. Maine established mandatory regulations to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 80% by 2050. Burning fossil fuels such as natural gas, propane, and heating oil in buildings represents 27% of Maine's emissions, and reducing these emissions would be a huge step. Passing LD 2077 plays a critical role in reaching this goal. Plus, Maine Won't Wait, our state's four-year plan for climate action, and the federal Inflation Reduction Act both have major funding opportunities for promoting electrification, efficiency, and weatherization. Continuing to use natural gas is inconsistent with these major policy initiatives, and will set us farther back from our goals.

We all witnessed the two floods we had in the last two months. Entire roads were destroyed by overflowing rivers. I have a family-friend whose house on the shoreline was wrecked by ocean waves reaching record highs, and her house wasn't the only one. It's been the hottest year on record, and it will continue getting hotter. We are now experiencing climate change. It's not a future thing, it's happening now. And how do we stop climate change? We move away from fossil fuels, which includes natural gas. We've known this for years, so let's take action. The cost of addressing climate change is far smaller than the cost of NOT addressing climate change.

Natural gas's major component is methane, and it is a climate "super-pollutant" that has more than 80 times the warming power of carbon dioxide over 20 years. Research shows that methane leaks from distribution mains, services, and appliances within the home are systematically undercounted, which is not great because methane releases toxic chemicals. Burning gas for cooking and heating creates indoor air pollution linked to asthma in children, exposes people to carcinogens like benzene, and contributes to the formation of ground-level ozone or smog. This is especially concerning for me because I have asthma. I know that natural gas is unsafe, but I am constantly exposed to it, as it is used everywhere from electricity to heating homes to heating stoves. Multiple of my best friends have had dangerous gas leaks in their homes. Thankfully, they are safe now, but gas leaks can and have led to fires and explosions, and have long-term health effects. We have all the alternatives to natural gas, so let's stay consistent with our climate goals, keep Mainers healthy, and keep natural gas in the past.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please vote 'ought to pass' on LD 2077.

Sincerely,
Maya Faulstich