

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY
COMMITTEE, Date

LD 2077 An Act Regarding Customer Costs and the Environmental and
Health Effects of Natural Gas
-In Opposition-

Good afternoon, Senate Chair Lawrence, House Chair Zeigler and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology. My name is Matt Morrill, and I am the CEO for Mastway Development.

My wife and I were born, raised and live in Augusta, Maine. We formed a real estate development company called Mastway Development to develop underutilized properties throughout the State of Maine. We develop, design and build commercial and residential buildings for office, multi-family housing, student housing and affordable housing and have built/renovated numerous buildings enveloping well over 100,000 square feet that are served by natural gas.

I am submitting testimony against LD An Act Regarding Customer Costs and the Environmental and Health Effects of Natural Gas.

It appears that one of the driving forces behind this bill is to push us further into total electrification. I am a proponent of electrification to a certain degree, but total dependence on electric based heat sources is unwise in my opinion. Maine's drastic swing in temperatures and increase in severe storms has proven to us that we need some form of back up heat to electrical heating. Having natural gas available when the power has gone out has saved some of our properties from freeze up during the drastic cold snaps where the heat pumps couldn't keep up or the power was out.

Developing properties now a days is also getting increasingly difficult; sites are more challenging, and construction costs are much higher. Natural gas is not only convenient, but it has proven to be an affordable and safe fuel source in our buildings and has also allowed us to build some structures in tight proximity where propane or oil tanks could not fit. Had we needed to rely on oil or propane alone we would have had to build far less units in some instances because we simply did not have enough room for propane or oil tanks. The economics just would not work with building fewer housing units in some of our projects.

So much has changed with the introduction of natural gas to our State. Construction is tailored to natural gas systems and the availability of it and keeps fuel pricing competitive. Pulling back on natural gas availability and further expansion now would just complicate and hamstring Maine to stay competitive. It would increase the reliance on electricity, propane or heating oil in the areas not served by natural gas, thus giving those fuel sources the ability to not have to be as competitive on pricing with one less hat in the ring.

Maine is a wonderful place to live and work; my family has lived and worked here for generations, and I hope my children will carry on our business to keep creating more affordable housing and business options. Please don't approve a bill like this that would make Maine even more difficult to do business in.

Respectfully submitted by:



Matt Morrill
Mastway Development LLC