

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY  
COMMITTEE

LD 2077 An Act Regarding Customer Costs and the Environmental and  
Health Effects of Natural Gas  
-In Opposition-  
January 24, 2024

Good afternoon Senate Chair Lawrence, House Chair Zeigler and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology. My name is Christopher Wasileski, and I am the Director of Real Estate Development and part owner for Cumberland Crossing by OceanView.

Cumberland Crossing by OceanView is an one hundred five unit (105) approved Senior Housing project served by Summit Natural Gas. Cumberland Crossing independent living cottages are extremely energy efficient and equipped with Solar Photovoltaic (PV) panels, natural gas generators, as well as Viessmann high efficiency boilers for hydronic heat. Electric heating and cooling ductless mini-split heat pumps (Fujitsu brand) are also available as an option to add. We use all local (in-state) builders and sub-contractors and have sourced our lumber and windows (via Phinney Lumber / Ware Butler, Hancock Lumber & Mathew's Bros., etc.) locally and sustainably. Our sister communities, Highland Green of Topsham (Served by Maine Natural Gas) and OceanView of Falmouth (Served by Dead River Co. / LP); also employ many of the same systems and technologies. Our company employs more than 200 workers.

I am here to testify/I submit testimony against LD 2077 An Act Regarding Customer Costs and the Environmental and Health Effects of Natural Gas.

Given our business model and partnership with our suppliers (MNG, Summit, DR, etc.) and local vendors; I firmly believe that LD 2077 is bad policy since LD 2077 will make the cost of future gas installations to senior communities like ours cost prohibitive.

I also believe that restricting Mainer's ability to chose the fuel they heat their homes with is not good policy; particularly during a rough winter with hundreds of thousands of power outages as well as flooding and natural disasters (Dec. 2023-present). When the lights and power go out – what will owners of homes with electric baseboard or heat pumps turn to? Most likely LP or Natural Gas generators; diesel fuel or even K1. Furthermore, the most rural Maine communities may want to reduce their energy costs through fuel price competitiveness and access to new energy sources such as Natural Gas pipelines. I do not understand why LD 2077 is targeting a growing industry that can help our state.

While not a fully renewable resource like Solar and Wind; Natural Gas represents an emission reduction from coal, oil or even LP fuel. We should not de-incentivize a fuel or technology that will assist with bridging the gap on resources towards our renewable energy future. Per DOE EIA statistics – Renewable energy sources (Solar, Wind, Biomass, Geothermal, & Hydroelectric) still only comprise under 12% of our consumption nationwide. With a significant increase in Natural Gas domestic production over the past few years – why would our state pass a bill hampering an important part of our energy future?

Respectfully submitted:

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Director of Development / Part Owner  
OceanView at Cumberland, LLC