



19 Community Drive • Augusta, Maine 04330 • (207) 622-7501 • Fax: (207) 623-3590

Testimony in Opposition of LD 2077 (“An Act Regarding Customer Costs and the Environmental and Health Effects of Natural Gas”)

J. Andrew Cashman on behalf of the Maine Association of REALTORS®

January 23, 2024

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology, my name is Andy Cashman. I am the Founder of Resolve Government Relations. We represent the Maine Association of REALTORS®, a professional trade association established in 1936 with over 6,500 members statewide. REALTORS® grow Maine’s economy and build Maine communities. Our members represent buyers and sellers involved in both residential and commercial real estate transactions. Our membership also includes industry affiliates, such as lenders, closing agents, title agents, appraisers, building inspectors, surveyors, etc. The Maine Association is chartered by the National Association of REALTORS® (NAR), the largest trade association in the country.

This bill would restrict access to alternative heat sources for properties and constrain development based on limited choice. Home sale prices are at historic levels in Maine and housing inventory is at all-time lows. Increasing restrictions and available resources would only further contribute to our housing shortage.

This bill would limit consumer choices and in turn, private property rights by denying a property owner the ability to utilize natural gas as power or heat source. Any restriction that adds to the cost of new construction, development, and ownership of residential and commercial property should be closely examined, especially in our current housing climate. The choice to use natural gas may be based on personal preference, or it may be the most readily available resource for the consumer as it relates to finances or physical location. Many Mainers rely on assistance for utilities and driving up expense of one source through restrictions will do more harm than good.

We support and encourage the development and voluntary use of alternative energy sources for sustainability and energy conservation. If passed, however, this bill would do the opposite. MAR opposes limiting property owner choice as it relates to what features they include in their homes or businesses. Restricting natural gas will create disadvantages in both the development of new housing opportunities and in the economic stability of our local businesses. For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 2077. Thank you for your time and consideration.



REALTOR® - is a registered mark which identifies a professional in real estate who subscribes to a strict Code of Ethics as a member of the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS®



EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

12781773.1