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In Support L.D. 556
   An Act to Preserve Heating and Energy Choice by Prohibiting a Municipality
   from Prohibiting a Particular Energy System or Energy Distributor.

To Members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government:

My name is Dean L. Bennett and I have served municipal governments in various roles of employment for more than 45 years. Code Enforcement, Planner and Economic Development Director, Regional Council Director and Director of Planning of the local Development District in Bangor, Maine.

I am very familiar with municipal Home Rule, and the right and ability of an organized municipality, engaging in the privilege and obligation of self- governance with the utilization of home rule though locally adopted Ordinances.

Any local ordinance that deprives individuals of choice that is not related to an immediate threat to public health, safety and welfare is an assault on freedom. Utilizing government to affect preferred methods of energy, or limiting diversity of options is, in my opinion, a blatant overreach of government. When that occurs, unfortunately the only method to correction tends to be the same tool, known as legislation.

The fact that L.D. 556 exists is evidence that a very poorly crafted effort was undertaken to infuse a political perspective into public policy. To create legislation that seeks to limit municipal powers is an indication of failure of policy. The individual rights that L. D. 556 attempts to protect being "freedom of choice" is a sad commentary on the state of our country.

It is imperative that L.D. 556 be approved to restore what used to be assumed rights of all citizens, before the government sent its tentacles into the lives and choices of people, that it had no business in doing to begin with.

Government makes mistakes, as do decision makers. The test of integrity if fixing what is wrong with what is right. I encourage the support of L.D. 556 to restore the basic freedom of choice, that has apparently been compromised.