



March 27, 2025

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Terry Sutton

*President*

Chip Leighton

*Vice President*

Yemaya St. Clair

*Secretary*

Jennifer Wilson

*Treasurer*

Joann Bautista

Terry Davies

Chris Ellingwood

Lauren Gauthier

Joe Ingreem

John Roberts

Elaine Rosen

Justin Rosner

Maurice A. Selinger III

Jay Tansey

Lannie Welch

Mark R. Swann

*Executive Director*

55 Portland Street

Portland, ME 04101

207.775.0026

[info@preblestreet.org](mailto:info@preblestreet.org)

[www.preblestreet.org](http://www.preblestreet.org)



United Way  
of Southern Maine



Good morning, Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and Members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee,

My name is Julie Orrego, and I am the Advocacy Supervisor at Preble Street. Preble Street operates 16 programs throughout Maine, and its staff works daily alongside hundreds of individuals and families who struggle with housing insecurity. Our mission is to provide accessible, barrier-free services that empower individuals facing challenges related to homelessness, housing, hunger, and poverty and to advocate for solutions to these issues.

Preble Street supports LD 1080, An Act Prohibiting Public Utilities from Requiring Deposits Based Solely on a Residential Customer's Income. This bill represents a significant step toward promoting fairness and accessibility for all residents in Maine, particularly those who may be financially vulnerable or rely on public assistance, such as General Assistance or the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP).

At Preble Street, we witness the profound struggle our clients face when asked to pay utility deposits. Many of these individuals and families have little or no income and survive on a strict monthly budget. Being required to pay a deposit based solely on their income presents a significant financial strain.

Many households in Maine struggle to balance essential utilities with other living expenses, and the additional burden of an upfront deposit can create immediate hardship, leading families to choose between putting food on the table and keeping the lights on in their homes.

To put it into perspective, [Central Maine Power \(CMP\)](#) requires deposits equivalent to the “anticipated bills for the two consecutive months of highest usage in the past year at the new location.” While CMP allows payment in installments, people with existing payment plans may still face the harsh reality of paying the deposit in full upfront. This adds a burden for many Mainers already struggling to make ends meet. [According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration](#), the average monthly electric bill in Maine is \$153.56. If Mainers are required to pay double that amount upfront, it may leave them unable to cover other essential expenses, such as food, rent, or medicine.

Requiring the Public Utilities Commission to implement this rule by October 1, 2025, ensures that this change will be timely and actionable. By updating these rules, we can create a more equitable and just system where all Mainers can access vital services, such as electricity, gas, and water, without undue financial barriers.

50 years of turning hunger and homelessness into opportunity and hope

Preble Street recommends passing LD 1080 because it would prevent discriminatory practices based on income for applicants who have not previously been utility customers or have a service gap. It would also reflect our commitment to fairness and the well-being of all Maine residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

