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Testimony in Support of LD 1037 An Act to Lower the Energy Burden of Maine Residents by Advancing Climate Change Goals March 27, 2025

Senator Tepler, Representative Doudera, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources,

My name is Mary-Rita Reinhard, and I am the Interim Executive Director of the Maine Community Action Partnership, a statewide organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of Maine people by advocating for, promoting and supporting the work of the Maine community action agencies. We respectfully submit the following testimony in support of LD 1037, An Act to Lower the Energy Burden of Residents by Advancing Climate Change Goals.

Our state's greatest resource is our people, and our state's policies shape people's possibilities. In Community Action, we create conditions that invite children to learn and adults to apply their skills, tapping into the hidden potential in our communities. Through our Whole Family approach, we build a family's capacity for sustained stability and economic growth. We invest in the family's well-being, we let them drive their own story, and we have tangible success.

To that end, among other programs and services, we administer the Home Energy Assistance Program for heating (HEAP). We know that reducing energy burdens for Mainers is vital for improving well-being and sustainability in communities across Maine. We are pleased that LD 1037 incorporates by statute the consideration of energy burdens into the Maine Climate Council's annual report to the Legislature. We also wish to commend the recent work of the Maine Climate Council in including consideration of energy burdens on Maine residents in its most recent report. By incorporating recommendations around reducing energy burdens into statute, we can ensure this important consideration to help Maine residents thrive remains an important part of the Maine Climate Council's work moving forward.

When reducing energy burdens is centered as an important part of Maine's climate change goals, our communities are better positioned to prosper into the future. We urge the committee to vote Ought to Pass on LD 1037.

Sincerely,

Mary-Rita Reinhard

Mary-Rita Reinhard
Interim Executive Director
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