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Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development

LD 996—An Act to Create the Weatherization Plus Program and Weatherization Plus Fund

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Housing and Economic Development, my name is Karen Blakelock, policy advisor for the Nature Conservancy in Maine. **I appreciate this opportunity to offer written comments in support of LD 996.**

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that both nature and people can thrive. We work in more than 70 countries, and we use a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners.

A recent poll conducted by TNC indicates that most Mainers are worried about the high cost of electricity with 71% of Maine voters stating that they feel the cost of electricity to be an extremely serious or very serious concern.¹ Weatherization is a key step in achieving economy-wide decarbonization by deploying the principles of beneficial electrification—1. Use less, 2. Electrify everything, and 3. Power that electricity with well-sited renewable sources of generation.

Weatherization falls squarely into the “use less” strategy while being a cost-effective option to help Mainers reduce their energy use, live more comfortably, and by extension, lower their monthly energy bills. TNC envisions a world where both people and nature can thrive, and efforts to support weatherization and energy efficiency benefits both.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and I am happy to answer questions at any time.

¹ **Methodology:** From February 21-25, 2025, the bipartisan research team of New Bridge Strategy and FM3 Research completed 515 interviews among registered voters throughout Maine. Interviews were conducted online as well as on landlines and cell phones. The margin of error for the full sample is +/-4.32 percent; margins of sampling error for subgroups within the sample will be larger. Some percentages may sum to more than 100 percent due to rounding.