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Testimony in Support: LD 2078, An Act to Establish the Electricity Cost Fairness Refundable Tax Credit

Greetings Senator Grohoski, Representative Sayre, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation. My name is Alf Anderson, and I am an Associate State Director for Advocacy and Outreach for AARP Maine. AARP is a non-profit, non-partisan social mission organization with more than 200,000 members across the state. We work on a range of issues at the state level that are of importance to Mainers 50 and older.

I am submitting this testimony in Support of LD 2078 because it would be a step in the right direction in addressing the affordability challenges being faced by so many electricity ratepayers today.

The proposed Electricity Cost Fairness Credit aligns directly with our organization's mission to promote economic equity and reduce the burden of essential utility costs on Maine households. By targeting relief to those most affected by high electricity costs and indexing the benefit to inflation, the legislation aims to ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness in addressing cost-of-living challenges.

The bill's structure, including its phase-out provisions and refundability, is designed to maximize impact for lower- and moderate-income families, which aligns with the AARP's focus on supporting vulnerable populations.

We would also highlight for the committee that there are many older Mainers who are not required to file tax returns and may not benefit from this program as currently proposed. We would recommend the consideration of an amendment that could address this group, who are also facing affordability challenges.

Late in 2024, AARP conducted a survey of Mainers over the age of 45. According to those results, 80% of respondents felt that legislators were not doing enough to keep electricity affordable. We see LD 2078 as creative legislative action to begin addressing the concerns of those on low- and fixed-incomes and we urge the committee members to vote in favor of the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our views on this important bill. If I can answer any questions or provide any further information, you can reach me at aanderson@aarpp.org or 207.330.1147.

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