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February 18th, 2026

Re: Supplemental Budget Proposal Hearing; Public Assistance Programs

Senator Ingwersen, Representative Meyer, and the members of the Joint Standing Committee on Health and Human Services and the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee,

My name is Victoria Forkus, and I serve as the Managing Director of the Maine Community Action Partnership (MeCAP). Our network administers the Home Energy Assistance Program through the Maine State Housing Authority, and we fully support the proposal to provide annual heating assistance payments to households that receive SNAP benefits.

Families who receive SNAP benefits must meet income eligibility requirements and are already navigating the challenges of poverty. This proposal seeks to reduce the burden of heating costs for families that have already been identified as financially vulnerable. Under Title 22, Section 3108 of Maine law allows the state to determine an alternative pathway for providing a SNAP standard utility allowance in response to a change in federal law – the supplemental budget proposes to fund the program.

This annual payment would offer meaningful relief for families that are already experiencing financial hardship. This program helps SNAP households avoid crises, keep their household budget stable, and keep their homes warm throughout the winter months.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Victoria D. Forkus

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