



**Testimony of Jessica Fay for
The Maine Council on Aging
February 19, 2026
In Support of LD 2203**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy Utilities and Technology,

My name is Jess Fay and I am the Policy and Advocacy Director for the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA), a broad, multidisciplinary network of over 140 organizations, businesses, municipalities, and older community members working to ensure we can all live healthy, engaged, and secure lives with choices and opportunities as we age at home and in community settings. I also serve on the Electric Ratepayer Advisory Council (ERAC). I am testifying in support of LD 2203 “An Act to Limit Rates Charged to Low-income Electricity Consumers”

In 2024 the Electric Ratepayer Advisory Council found that approximately 100,000 low-income Maine households struggle to pay high energy bills. On average those households pay approximately 8% of their household income just for electricity, which is double the maximum recommended by consumer experts.

However, the energy burden does not end there. Rural low-income households also face high costs of transportation and the volatility of unregulated home heating fuel prices (oil, propane). Many older people and people living with disabilities are at home during the day which increases both electric and heating costs. The challenges facing older people with fixed incomes are often choosing between purchasing medications, food, or paying utility bills. The added stress of disconnection increases household tension and wears on personal health.

Just over 300,000 people in Maine are over 65. The 2025 Healthy Aging Data Report finds that 17% of people over 65 live in households at or below \$20,000. In many rural communities across Maine, this percentage can be as high as 39%. To be clear, this means that more than half of the households that are energy burdened, 51,000, include a person over 65.

According to the Social Security Administration, the average social security benefit in Maine is approximately \$1800 per month. According to the Elder Economic Security Standard Index, the average amount that a single older person in good health with no mortgage needs to meet their basic needs is about \$2100. Older Mainers are more likely to live in less energy efficient older homes. People who cannot afford to meet their basic needs have a very hard time making their homes more energy efficient. People in inefficient homes use more electricity heating and cooling their homes.

The report “Is Maine’s CEP-Served Residential Retail Electric Supply Market Affordable? 2025 Update” shed light on the differential between how much more lower income people pay for

electricity supply and how LIAP customers represent a growing proportion of CEP customers. Making sure that the LIAP program uses the funds as efficiently and effectively as possible is essential to its availability to those who need some help paying the bills - including low-income older people. LD 2203 would be a step towards making sure that LIAP recipients aren't overpaying for their electricity and that they won't be charged more than the standard offer. The Maine Council on Aging supports this initiative.

Thank you for considering this proposal.