



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Good afternoon Senator Curry, Representative Roberts, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Innovation, Development, Economic Advancement and Business. I am State Representative Benjamin Hymes of Waldo, and I am proudly serving in the Maine House representing the folks of Brooks, Jackson, Knox, Monroe, Swanville, Thorndike, Unity, Waldo and Frankfort in District 38.

I am pleased to be here today to present LD 818 "An Act to Establish an Emergency Fuel Reserve".

Over the past year, it has been increasingly obvious that we have a dependency on foreign fuel sources. In the summer of 2022, we saw that the upcoming winter was going to be extremely hard for Mainers when it came to energy costs. Specifically for the +60% of Mainers that rely on heating oil. My bill is straight forward and to the point. We need to have an emergency fuel reserve that we can tap into in the event that foreign policy and fuel supplies deteriorate to keep Maine warm and in business.

We as a state government were unprepared for the fuel crisis that was presented to us this past winter. Fortunately, we had surplus money that we were able to send out to people in the winter. We were lucky. My solution is a proactive bipartisan solution to prepare us for the future.

As an amendment to my bill, I would like to propose that the supply be reduced to 30 days. I would also like to discuss during the work session with whom the authority resides to release the fuel reserve.

I look forward to the work session to really find a good, proactive solution to a future crisis.

Thank you for your time and I am here to answer any questions.