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**passivhausMAINE's Testimony in Support of LD 1101: An Act to Support Lower Home Energy Costs by Establishing a Home Energy Scoring System**

*passivhausMAINE is a non-profit organization committed to decreasing carbon [emitted and embodied], dependency on fossil fuels and the costs for indoor conditioning in Maine. It works to support the passive house industry and community in Maine, North America and internationally.*

March 30th, 2023

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and Honorable Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology,

LD 1101 was born from passivhausMAINE's retrofitMAINE project. While my work on the Energy Tag of MUBEC is focused on increased efficiency and resilience of new buildings, in existing buildings, we have found retrofits to be challenging in cost, inconvenience and complexity with the issue of equitable access to building improvement as a serious consequence. LD 1101 represents a step to increase the probability that efficiency measures actually take place with a low barrier, voluntary audit which prioritizes potential projects to increase a building's score and also points consumers to funding opportunities. We have a once in a generation opportunity for wide scale updating of the building stock both for mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

As the bill is written, there is much work to be done to design and define the type of audit. We propose a flexible and voluntary approach which can include both in-person and remote options. There is significant work to define the energy scoring system and also to identify the administering body. Efficiency Maine is mentioned in LD 1101. There may be reasons to consider a different home for this program.

LD 1101 has a series of impressive audit deliverables. In light of conversations in the last weeks, we suggest at least two other measurements be included: 1. embodied carbon calculations of the retrofit projects and 2. indoor air quality and ventilation recommendations.

I encourage voting "ought to pass" and I would eagerly participate in a working group to help shape the details for an equitable and effective set of rules for this important program. Maine has some of the oldest building stock in the country, the highest proportion of buildings heated with #2 heating oil (with volatile prices) and the oldest population in the country. Improvement to the existing 550,000 residential units is a top priority. We see LD 1101 as a significant step in tackling the challenges of needed updates, for decarbonization and increased resilience. LD 1101 represents both climate mitigation and adaptation.

Respectfully submitted,

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**Pros include:**

- **Equity centered:** transparency at sale, lowering operations costs, increasing building resilience, healthy interiors, durability in extreme weather events.
- Voluntary
- Consumer protections at points of sale
- leveraging improvements for sellers' benefit
- increased participation in rebates, incentives and tax credits
- decreased carbon emissions and costs for operations in the Single Family Home market.
- Anonymous collection of carbon and building stock data to inform future building policy
- Remote Audit is less costly, less workforce intensive- reserving workers for the actual retrofit work
- Bolsters Clean Energy Workforce- either as auditors or retrofit construction.
- Embracing this once in a generation opportunity to decrease carbon emissions and increase durability of Maine's aged building stock
- **Building Stock improvement:** Maine has some of the oldest building stock in the country, the highest proportion of buildings heated with #2 heating oil (\$\$volatile prices) and the oldest population in the country. Improvement to existing buildings is a top priority is a single bullet which improves multiple challenges.

**IMPACTS:**

- **Equity:**Equity centered: transparency at sale, activating cost saving incentives, lowering operations costs, increasing building resilience, healthy interiors, durability in extreme weather events.
- **Climate Action:** decreased carbon emissions and costs for operations in the Single Family Home market. Sistering with current rebate and incentive programs to encourage participation. LD 1101 represents both climate mitigation and adaptation.
- **Fiscal health:** The audit will point to local, state and federal incentives. This program also provides anonymous data collection for future housing and building policy.
- **Economic Development:** Bolsters Clean Energy Workforce- either as auditors or retrofit construction.
- **Quality of Life:** Improved personal wellness with healthy interiors, predictable costs, comfort of an energy efficient home and resilience in extreme weather events.