



Mark W. Lawrence  
Senator, District 35

**THE MAINE SENATE**  
131st Legislature

3 State House Station  
Augusta, Maine 04333

**Testimony of Senator Mark Lawrence introducing LD 1971 “Resolve, to Ensure that Eligible Customers Receive Payments from the Energy Rate Relief Fund”**

**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services**

**May 24, 2023**

Good afternoon, Representative Zeigler and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology. I am Senator Mark Lawrence, and I represent Senate District 35, which is made up of Eliot, Kittery, Ogunquit, South Berwick, and York. I am here today to present LD 1971, “Resolve, to Ensure that Eligible Customers Receive Payments from the Energy Rate Relief Fund.”

I was asked to introduce this bill on behalf of my colleague Senate President Jackson. The bill was brought to President Jackson by the Department of Economic and Community Development, and is designed to help with one of President Jackson’s bills from last session, LD 2010.

The goal of LD 2010 was to provide small businesses who were hit hardest by severe electricity rate increases a bit of relief. It created a tiered credit for eligible small businesses and organizations that were impacted by increases in electricity costs caused by the spike in the price of natural gas and its effect on the standard offer. That credit could be worth as much as \$3000 depending on the businesses energy usage. The funding for this program came from DECD.

This program was successful, but they had an error due to application glitches. Due to this, roughly 64 businesses could not receive any payments from the rate relief fund. LD 1971 aims to resolve this issue, by getting money to those businesses that missed out the first time. DECD has already confirmed that they have the funds to complete these payments. This bill makes sure that we keep the promise that we made to Maine’s small businesses.

I thank you for your time and consideration. Representatives from DECD and the PUC are here to answer any questions you may have.