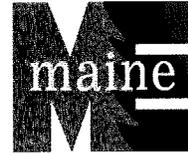




JANET T. MILLS
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



HEATHER JOHNSON
COMMISSIONER

May 24, 2023

**TESTIMONY OF VICTORIA FOLEY, DIRECTOR OF LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS & COMMUNICATIONS
FOR THE MAINE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, REGARDING
LD 1971, "RESOLVE, TO ENSURE THAT ELIGIBLE CUSTOMERS RECEIVE PAYMENTS FROM THE
ENERGY RATE RELIEF FUND"**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Victoria Foley, and I am the Director of Legislative Affairs and Communications for DECD. I am submitting this testimony in support of LD 1971, President Jackson's *"Resolve, to Ensure that Eligible Customers Receive Payments from the Energy Rate Relief Fund."*

The purpose of this resolve is to rectify an oversight in the language of the rate relief program established in LD 2010 in the 130th legislature, funded through American Rescue Plan federal dollars.

The definition of eligible customers in LD 2010 did not adequately reflect eligibility for customers whose 30-day billing cycles resulted in their not receiving a bill for the month of February. The bill before you seeks to ensure that customers who would have been eligible for rate relief funds, but did not receive a February 2022 invoice, receive those funds. The change is retroactive to October 30, 2022, to allow electric utilities to provide these relief funds to eligible customers.

This is intended as a targeted fix to address a small number of customers: we understand there are roughly 70 Versant customers who did not receive relief funds as a result of their 30-day billing cycles. The Department looks forward to working with the committee to address this change and ensure the rate relief funds are distributed.

Thank you for your time and consideration, I am happy to address any questions or concerns you may have.