



State of Maine
Office of the Public Advocate
112 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0112
(207) 624-3687 (voice) 711 (TTY)
www.maine.gov/meopa

Janet T. Mills
GOVERNOR

William S. Harwood
PUBLIC ADVOCATE

**Testimony In Support of
LD 1971, “Resolve, to Ensure that Eligible Customers Receive Payments from the
Energy Rate Relief Fund”
May 24, 2023**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology,

My name is William Harwood, here today as Public Advocate, to testify in support of LD 1971, “Resolve, to Ensure that Eligible Customers Receive Payments from the Energy Rate Relief Fund.”

Last session, the Legislature passed LD 2010, “Resolve, To Help Certain Businesses with Electricity Costs.” President Jackson introduced this legislation to help alleviate the electricity costs for qualifying commercial customers.

Earlier this winter, our office was contacted by a business in the Versant service territory that qualified but did not receive any payments, as a result of a misunderstanding by Versant of the intent of LD 2010. The OPA, along with Versant and the Senate President’s Office, has been working to ensure that these businesses receive the relief payments that are rightfully theirs. LD 1971 authorizes the Department of Economic Development to make these payments to entities who did not receive funds from the Energy Rate Relief Fund in 2022.

Thank you for your time, attention, and consideration of this testimony. The Office of the Public Advocate looks forward to working with the Committee on LD 1971 and will be available for the work session to assist the Committee in its consideration of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William S. Harwood".

William S. Harwood
Public Advocate