



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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Good Afternoon Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and distinguished members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology committee. I am here today to discuss my strong opposition to LD 2077 *"An Act Regarding Customer Costs and the Environmental and Health Effects of Natural Gas"*

I believe that this proposed Legislation is not only a clear case of Government Overreach but also causes further harm to hard-working Maine taxpayers with an increased cost for existing Gas Customers. Rather than slowly phasing out the use of natural gas, we should be allowing Mainers the freedom to choose what options work best for them, and their families. The entire time I have been a State Legislator for House District 5, I have consistently heard from constituents who struggle to heat their homes and purchase their basic necessities like food and prescriptions. I stand before you today asking, how can this legislation possibly help our struggling constituents?

The bottom line is that Natural Gas is one of the most affordable options the people of this great state have to heat their homes. It is 75% cheaper to heat a home with natural gas than with electric heat pumps per million BTU according to a chart from Maine's Energy Office. These numbers do not lie. This is not to say that I am inherently against electric heat pumps or other heating sources however, this is a free market economy designed so each citizen can make options for themselves, without the overreach of a government that does not pay their bills.

We serve the people who elected us. We do not serve government agencies who push their agendas onto willing lawmakers for their own profit. It is time that we stood for the best interests of OUR constituents, and found solutions to help them save money, not take away from what little they already have.

I strongly oppose this legislation, and I implore each of you to do the same, for the sake of those who are already struggling to heat their homes.

Thank you for your time,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Joseph F. Underwood'.

Joseph F. Underwood  
State Representative