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February 1, 2024

**Testimony in Support: L.D. 2067, An Act to Continue the Arrearage Management Program**

Chairs Lawrence and Zeigler and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology. I am Alf Anderson, Associate State Director for Advocacy and Outreach for AARP Maine. AARP is a non-profit, non-partisan social mission organization with more than 200,000 members across the state. We work on a range of energy issues at the state level. The core principles we approach this work with include affordability, reliability, sustainability, and accountability.

AARP Maine has supported the development of Maine's programs to help low-income households obtain and maintain essential electricity service. Maine currently receives federal funds for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. Those funds are primarily directed to a household's primary heating source and not electricity. Under the direction of the Maine Public Utilities Commission, Maine ratepayers fund the Low Income Assistance Program (LIAP) that provides bill payment assistance for ongoing electric service and the Arrearage Management Program (AMP) that provides a one-time opportunity to pay off an arrears balance. While LIAP is a permanent program that is routinely reviewed and funded annually, the AMP has been viewed as a temporary program with a statutory sunset provision. This bill extends that statutory sunset provision for another four years.

AARP Maine supports the continuation of the AMP, however, we would strongly recommend to the committee that the program be made permanent, as this bill would have done prior to the latest amendment. The program has been operating for several years and is in keeping with our policies to support programs that assist low income families to keep their essential electric service. The two programs complement each other, and both should be viewed as essential aspects of any well-developed bill payment assistance program.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our views on this important bill. If you have questions for me, I can be reached at [aanderson@aarp.org](mailto:aanderson@aarp.org) or at 207-330-1147.

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