

**Testimony of the Industrial Energy Consumer Group**  
**In Support of**  
***L.D. 556, An Act to Preserve Heating and Energy Choice by Prohibiting a Municipality from Prohibiting a Particular Energy System or Energy Distributor***  
**Before the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government**  
March 24, 2023

Good afternoon, Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government. I am Steven Hudson, an attorney with the firm of Preti Flaherty, here today on behalf of the Industrial Energy Consumer Group (IECG). IECG has been representing medium and large sized consumers of energy in Maine for more than twenty-five years at the state, regional and federal level. We advocate for policies that reduce the cost of energy for our members and cost-effectively help Maine achieve its climate goals. We share the concern of many of the people and organizations in this room about the work needed to adequately address climate change. That is the reason we emphasize cost-effective measures, in order to ensure that our collective resources are able to meet the challenge. IECG invites legislators, interested parties and the public to visit our website, <https://www.getmaineclimateright.com/>, to learn more about the IECG and its advocacy for cost-effective climate mitigation.

IECG was the first business group to advocate for the original Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative legislation, working with legislators, agencies, and environmental organizations to adapt the regional program to better meet Maine's needs. IECG is also proud of the role it played in ensuring strong bipartisan support of the Climate Council legislation, and IECG representatives have served on the Climate Council and many of its workgroups.

IECG is here today in strong support of L.D. 556, *An Act to Preserve Heating and Energy Choice by Prohibiting a Municipality from Prohibiting a Particular Energy System or Energy Distributor*. While our members work hard to responsibly operate their facilities, we feel that it is important to preserve the ability of businesses to use fuels that allow them to be cost-competitive with facilities in other states, and to respond flexibly to specific fuel shortages or other economic challenges. We note that the DEP's most recent Greenhouse Gas Reduction Progress Report provides proof that the industrial and energy sectors in Maine have met the challenge of reducing their climate impacts in Maine. We have done so without the threat of fuel bans that reduce our flexibility to respond to economic challenges. We also

note that perhaps the single greatest contributor to this progress has been the increased availability of natural gas to help our facilities operate efficiently while lowering our greenhouse gas emissions. But all fuels are important in this context, because natural gas availability remains constrained due lack of transmission pipeline infrastructure in New England and Maine's rural population. Having the flexibility to use other fuels, especially when electricity costs are high as they are now, is important to Maine's economy. While we do not support fuel bans at any level, such decisions should be made on a statewide basis not by individual towns.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments. IECG is happy to answer questions now or provide additional resources for the Committee at the work session.