



**March 24, 2025**

**TESTIMONY OF SUE WALTZ**

Owner / CFO of Waltz & Sons Propane

**BEFORE THE MAINE COMMITTEE ON STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

**Concerning LD 556 - An Act to Preserve Heating and Energy Choice by Prohibiting a Municipality from Prohibiting a Particular Energy System or Energy Distributor**

Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury and members of the State and Local Government Committee, I am pleased to have the opportunity to offer my comments regarding LD 556 An Act to Preserve Heating and Energy Choice by Prohibiting a Municipality from Prohibiting a Particular Energy System or Energy Distributor.

I, on behalf of my company, Waltz & Sons Propane, respectfully request that the committee vote PASS on this bill LD 556.

We are a family owned and operated Propane company located in Buxton. We service a 97% residential customer base in Southern Maine. Due to the diversity of our customer base and their various approaches to heating their homes, we feel it is imperative that their choices to heat and energize their homes not be restricted.

This Winter, we saw our customers propane usage increase to supplement their primary heating systems that rely on heat pumps. We have also seen an increase in installation of space heaters to keep pipes from freezing in cases where heat pumps have been unable to keep up in the extended frigid temperatures. We have seen a tremendous increase in generator installations which ensure primary heating units are operational when the power goes out. We work closely with HVAC companies who have stated there was a huge uptick in frozen pipes due to inadequate heat, and many customers call complaining about their heat pump systems not operating in cold temperatures as expected. We had customers call to revert to using their primary propane heating

systems as the heat pumps they installed caused their electricity bills to rise significantly.

An important note is that by establishing an energy choice bill we would leave room open for future renewable energy options such as renewable propane. We were the 1<sup>st</sup> company in Maine to receive renewable propane to be used in residential applications. This is fast becoming the next renewable energy source and would complement the assortment of energy choices already available in Maine. The very energy choices that we are hoping to preserve by passing this bill.

All fuel sources used for Primary Heating, be it electric for a Heat Pump, Oil, K-1, Wood Products, Propane or Natural Gas for a furnace or boiler, have high efficiency units which all meet stringent efficiency guidelines. However, regardless of how efficient and clean burning these units are, there may be a need to use different fuel sources for alternative heating solutions in a home or at least have a choice to do so. In many cases, Mainers use multiple sources of heat in their homes that they switch among based on cost, weather, and other variables. This choice is essential to making sure Mainers can afford to heat their homes.

Sometimes, it's the product that determines which fuel is chosen. This could be due to individual preference, space challenges, or code restrictions. By having a choice of energy sources, one can look at various options and choose one, or more, that works best for their home, and budget.

LD 556 helps ensure individual choice. As drafted, this bill would ensure that municipalities in Maine do not pass ordinances that directly or indirectly prohibit a consumer from choosing their own heating or energy system. This bill safeguards that individual choice so that Mainers can continue to do what makes sense for them economically and environmentally.

For these reasons, I, on behalf of my company, respectfully request that the committee vote PASS on this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.