



Testimony of
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Before
The Joint Standing Committee on ~~Housing and Economic Development (132nd)~~ *EUT*

Neither For Nor Against
LD 946: Resolve, to Increase Access to Energy Efficiency Programs by Low-income and Moderate-income Residents

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and honorable members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy and Utilities, I am Erik Jorgensen Senior Director of Government Relations and Communications at the Maine State Housing Authority (MaineHousing) and I am submitting this testimony neither for nor against **LD 946 Resolve, to Increase Access to Energy Efficiency Programs by Low-income and Moderate-income Residents.**

MaineHousing has been helping Maine people own, rent, repair, and heat their homes since 1969. We are an independent state authority (not a state agency) created to address the problems of unsafe, unsuitable, overcrowded, and unaffordable housing. We are authorized to issue bonds to finance single family mortgages for first time homebuyers and for affordable multi-family housing.

We are also authorized to administer a number of state and federal programs, including rental subsidies, weatherization, fuel assistance, two housing block grants, the low-income housing tax credit program, and homeless grant programs. We receive state general fund revenue for homeless programs and receive a dedicated portion of the real estate transfer tax for the Housing Opportunities for Maine (HOME) Fund.

LD 946 directs the Efficiency Maine Trust to modify its rules so that some EMT Resources would flow into MaineHousing to support our agency's weatherization programs. The cost of weatherizing a home is significantly higher than the funding that we are able to provide through our US Dept of Energy grant. This means that we do, in fact, have to find funds to leverage the DOE funds and complete the job. Finding these leverage resources often means that we have to redirect other energy related funds within MaineHousing to support these jobs. It's not that our federal funding is not being spent, but that there is an opportunity cost in terms of other things that we are not doing when we make that sort of substitution.

Would we welcome a new stream of funds to leverage our weatherization projects? You can be sure that we would, and if that funding were to become available through this bill, MaineHousing would

make good use of those funds. That said, while we would absolutely welcome the opportunity to work with EMT on such a collaboration, we would only want to do so with their willing participation and an understanding that such a diversion would not harm their program or reduce the impact of their planned and projected work in the area of weatherization.

We have concerns about repurposing funds that are currently being used for a similar public purpose by a sister agency, and just as we would hope that MaineHousing would not be asked to redirect funding we had received to another agency, we want to honor the good work that EMT does for households. While their program is different than ours, it definitely serves a similar purpose.

Thank you.