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**Testimony of Representative Melanie Sachs introducing
LD 995, An Act to Provide Funding for Low-income Electric Ratepayer Assistance
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology**

Senator Lawrence and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Melanie Sachs, and I am honored to represent the community of Freeport in the Maine Legislature.

I am before you today to introduce *LD 995, An Act to Provide Funding for Low-income Electric Ratepayer Assistance*, a bill submitted on behalf of the Office of the Public Advocate.

Per the Maine Office of the Public Advocate's data, "on average low-income ratepayers in Maine pay approximately 8% of their household income just for electricity — double the 4% maximum recommended by consumer experts."

While this committee continues to work together with our partners to lower the overall cost of electricity, it is important to also support the relief programs we have in place. Last session, the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee approved the one-time general fund appropriation of \$15 million dollars for the Low-income Assistance Program (LIAP) in the budget. LD 995 proposes the same one-time appropriation, with language outlining the threshold for assistance.

I recommend the Public Advocate, per our committee rules, be allowed to address the committee next to further discuss the proposed legislation.

Thank you for your time, and for the opportunity to submit this bill for your consideration.