



*Testimony of*  
Frank O'Hara, Chairman  
Board of Commissioners  
Maine State Housing Authority

*Before*  
The Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology (132<sup>nd</sup>)

Neither for nor against  
**LD 1270 An Act to Establish the Department of Energy Resources**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, I am Frank O'Hara, Chair of Maine State Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners and I am submitting this testimony neither for nor against **LD 1270 An Act to Establish the Department of Energy Resources**.

Sec A-8 on page 2 of this bill proposes a change to MaineHousing's Board of Commissioners by requiring "A commissioner with expertise in the construction sustainability requirements" established in MaineHousing's statute in Section 4726.

This doesn't add a commissioner to the Board, but rather reduces the number, from 4 to 3, of commissioners with more general affordable housing experience to serve on the Board.

Currently, our statute requires a commissioner with "expertise in energy efficiency issues regarding residential structures". We would suggest a better approach would be to amend this existing language to meet the needs of the sponsor, rather than create two seats with expertise requirements very close to each other.

While finding people willing to serve with such specific energy expertise could prove challenging, the bigger issue is that we feel it is essential to maintain the existing flexibility of having four board positions for candidates with a broad range of expertise in affordable housing and banking issues.

MaineHousing has prided itself as being an industry leader in energy efficiency and sustainable building practices for over 20 years. Energy efficiency for development we finance is baked into our programs, and backed up by statute. But as a \$3 billion affordable housing bank and administrator of over \$200 million in federal grants annually, we need to assure our Board composition remains as broad and flexible as possible.