

**Testimony on behalf of the Maine Labor Climate Council**  
*LD 996 “An Act to Create the Weatherization Plus Program and  
Weatherization Plus Fund”*  
*Housing and Economic Development Committee*  
*April 8, 2025*

Senator Curry, Representative Gere, and members of the Housing and Economic Development Committee, my name is Max Rush. I am a partner at the Resurgam Group and am speaking on behalf of our client, the Maine Labor Climate Council (MLCC). MLCC is a coalition of 20 labor unions here in the state of Maine working to ensure good jobs for all workers as our state transitions to clean energy. I am pleased to testify in support of LD 996 “An Act to Create the Weatherization Plus Program and Weatherization Plus Fund” sponsored by Representative Malon.

Here in Maine and around the country, we are experiencing a profound energy transition — the likes of which we have not seen in roughly a century. MLCC is supportive of the ambition of our state’s leadership on this issue, but we recognize that it is critical that this transition tackle income inequality just as rigorously as it tackles the climate crisis. In short, that we create a fairer outcome for our state and our country on the other side.

We want to thank the sponsor for not only bringing this forward, but for sponsoring LD 611, “An Act to Create the Whole Home Repairs Program” in the 131st Legislature. This resolve turned into a study from MaineHousing that helps to provide an overview of our weatherization programs in Maine. The biggest and clearest takeaway from that study is simple: that the weatherization program needs increased funding to build upon the work that we have already done here in our state.

However, we also want to ensure — to the best of our ability — that these dollars flow to middle and low-income households. Across all residential energy credits claimed in 2023, two thirds of the dollars flowed to households in the top 25% of national household income, while just 6% of the credits went to the bottom 50%. To its credit, Maine has done much better than this, but we can still do more — and we must do more — to ensure that our own investments aimed at saving Mainers money on their utility bills goes to those in our state who face the highest energy burdens.

To that end, when doing your diligence and working this legislation, we would offer a suggestion to the committee to look at including prevailing wage standards to the weatherization work that would be done under this bill. We believe that providing such standards would help to ensure that public money used for weatherization produces jobs with good wages — helping to retain our existing workforce in good-paying jobs.

While there is no doubt that we need to grow the clean energy workforce by recruiting and “skilling up” new workers, we just as urgently need to ensure a just and equitable transition that retains such workers who might already have decades of years experience in a trade.

Whether it’s laborers, electricians, HVAC installers, welders, or countless other trades, public investment on this scale should ensure a skilled and trained workforce. In May of last year, the GEO published a report commissioned from the Building Performance Association — one of the country’s leading weatherization trade groups — assessing the needs of Maine’s weatherization industry. They surveyed 70 large and small weatherization contractors across our state. By far the most common challenge faced by these businesses is recruiting, hiring, and retaining a skilled workforce. We believe that considering prevailing wage standards will help ensure that jobs related to weatherization are attractive jobs that help to keep well trained trades workers here in our state.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.