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**THE MAINE SENATE**  
132<sup>nd</sup> Legislature

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**LD 1212, “Resolve, to Study Opportunities for the Efficiency Maine Trust to Support the Promotion and Use of Modern Wood Heating”**

**Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology  
April 9, 2025**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology:

I am Matt Harrington; and I represent Senate District 33, which includes the York County municipalities of Alfred, Lebanon, Sanford and Waterboro.

I am honored to present for your consideration LD 1212, “*Resolve, to Study Opportunities for the Efficiency Maine Trust to Support the Promotion and Use of Modern Wood Heating.*”

LD 1212 does not seek the passage of new laws or new funding. Rather, it calls for Efficiency Maine and the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) to work with Maine’s private sector stakeholders from the modern wood heat industry to find ways to promote and capitalize on Maine’s competitive advantages in this important industry.

Our state government spends a lot of time promoting a “once size fits all” approach to heating. Often called “beneficial electrification,” it really boils down to promoting heat pumps as the only acceptable way to heat our homes and business. In the last 10-15 years, Efficiency Maine has effectively created the heat pump industry in Maine from scratch. They’ve trained their installer network, funded advertising campaigns for heat pumps and provided generous rebates and incentives to encourage Mainers to install them in their homes and businesses.

This body, however – the Maine legislature – has long supported the diversification of our heating options and, specifically, has been a strong supporter of modern wood heat in its many forms. This has always been – and it should continue to be – a bipartisan issue for us as legislators.

We, as members of the legislature and representatives of our local constituents, have long recognized the various forms of wood heat, which includes stoves and boilers that use biomass, wood pellets and wood chips, are the only heating options based upon a traditional Maine industry – forestry.

In the last few years, the legislature and the Maine Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) have shown great bipartisan support for the modern wood heat industry with the creation of Thermal Renewable Energy Credits (“T-RECs”) under LD 1494 from the 129th Legislature in 2019 and the subsequent

enactment of the Thermal Energy Investment Program in LD 597 during the 130th Legislature in 2021.

Funding generated from these programs already exists and has been set aside for the industry. What is really missing is a coordinated plan between our state government and the private sector to capitalize on those funds to promote the industry in a smart and thoughtful way.

Our neighbors in Vermont and New Hampshire have already been doing this for years.

In Vermont, for example, one third of their schools are heated with either wood chips or wood pellets, providing them with clean heating options and stable prices while also supporting their local forestry, logging and transportation economy.

New Hampshire, like Maine, also has a Thermal REC program, but they do a lot more than we do to promote it; and, as a result, in the last several years dozens of schools, hospitals and businesses have adopted modern wood heating options.

We need to do the same thing in Maine. We have an enormous competitive advantage in this industry and the funding to promote it already exists. What is missing is a plan and the willingness to implement it. This Resolve is an attempt to get started.

Therefore, the purpose of this Resolve is to direct Efficiency Maine and the DECD to work with stakeholders in the modern wood heating industry to review programs and incentives to encourage the promotion and use of modern wood heating. After working together to come up with this plan, the members would then submit a report to this Committee by December 3, 2025.

I am hopeful you will all support this commonsense Resolve so that we can create a coordinated and strategic approach to maximize program funds set aside for the modern wood industry.

I appreciate your time and attention. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.