



Teresa S. Pierce
Senator, District 25
Senate Majority Leader

THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

6 Waites Landing Road
Falmouth, ME 04105

Testimony of Senate Majority Leader Teresa S. Pierce introducing

LD 826, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Establish the School Energy Savings Revolving Loan Fund

Before the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

April 17, 2025

Chair Rotundo, Chair Gattine, and esteemed members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, my name is Teresa S. Pierce. I represent Senate District 25 which includes Falmouth, Cumberland, North Yarmouth, Yarmouth (majority), Gray, and Long Island and also have the honor of serving as the Senate Majority Leader. Thank you for the opportunity to introduce LD 826, An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Establish the School Energy Savings Revolving Loan Fund.

As a longtime champion for public education, I am glad to present this bill and further the conversation regarding constructing energy efficient schools. The goal is clear: LD 826 is focused on achieving a targeted goal of increasing energy efficiency, reducing environmental pollution, and saving taxpayer dollars in Maine's K-12 schools.

This bill provides for a bond issue, in the amount of \$10,000,000, to capitalize the School Energy Savings Revolving Loan Fund, which the bill establishes to support energy and energy efficiency projects in Maine schools to be administered by the Department of Education.

A recent study by the Maine Education Policy Research Institute (MEPRI) found that 76% of energy systems in Maine schools are over 20 years old, and 62% still rely on aging oil burners, many of which are inefficient and more likely to contribute to reduced air quality.

While the existing School Revolving Renovation Fund (SRRF) includes energy as a priority area, most of its current resources are used to address urgent concerns such as frail infrastructure, mold, poor air quality, and deteriorating safety conditions in school buildings. Few funds remain for HVAC and energy system upgrades which can produce immediate financial return on investments. For example, 77% of Maine schools currently lack proper air conditioning systems and with the rising temperatures in the early fall and late spring seasons, this leads to uncomfortable and unhealthy indoor learning environments. I appreciate Senator Bennett bringing LD 11 before the Education Committee to further that specific conversation.



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The proposed Energy Savings Revolving Loan Fund can be administered using the same process as the current School Revolving Renovation Fund and is designed to work in conjunction with it to maximize school improvement outcomes. The bill also calls for dedicated staff to streamline implementation. This legislation significantly supports the Maine Legislature's goals of ensuring safe, healthy environments that promote the well-being of all students, which are foundational to learning and development.

As we continue our work in this body to continue supporting Maine's students, teachers and communities, let us recommit ourselves to ensuring they have safe and energy efficient school buildings to learn and thrive every day. Thank you for the opportunity for this bill, it's great to be back before this Committee. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.