

Testimony of Ashley Luszczki
In Opposition to L.D. 1473, An Act to Require Utilities to Monitor Meters for Natural Gas Leaks
Before the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee
April 24, 2025

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Ashley Luszczki. I am here on behalf of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, representing a network of 5,000+ small to large businesses. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to L.D. 1473, An Act to Require Utilities to Monitor Meters for Natural Gas Leaks.

Maine's natural gas utilities are subject to safety regulations enforced by the Maine Public Utilities Commission (PUC) and the federal Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration. We believe this legislation is redundant of what is currently required of our natural gas utilities and has the potential to increase costs.

Currently, natural gas utilities are required to submit an operations and maintenance filing to the PUC outlining the frequency that they will inspect meters. Additionally, they report to the PUC findings from those inspections. It's important to recognize that Maine's natural gas utilities have been making significant financial investments in recent years to increase the safety and effectiveness of Maine's natural gas pipeline.

As is frequently mentioned by the Chamber, we are highly focused on ensuring Maine's policies are structured in a way that keeps energy prices affordable and reliable for businesses. We are concerned that if this bill is seeking additional monitoring, it will impose a financial burden on natural gas utilizes – costs that will likely be passed on to consumers, including manufacturing businesses, some of whom rely heavily on natural gas. These increased operational costs would hinder the competitiveness of Maine businesses – impacting economic opportunities for Mainers and local communities.

While the safety of Maine's residents is of utmost importance, we believe much of what this legislation aims to achieve is already being done and it could impact the economic vitality of businesses dependent on natural gas. We appreciate your consideration and urge you to oppose L.D. 1473.