

Gina LeDuc-Kuntz
Freeport

Dear Members on the of Environmental and Natural Resources, my name is Gina LeDuc-Kuntz. I live in Freeport.

I urge you to vote "ought to pass" on LD 1498: An Act To Prevent Increased Heating Fuel, Natural Gas, Gasoline and Diesel Fuel.

Maine is both an old and a cold State. Nearly 21% of Maine's population is over age 65, and it Maine maintains the oldest median age in the country at 44.9 years.

Considering the age of Maine residents, it is easy to assume at least 21% of the State's population are living on a limited, fixed incomes. Any rise in gas prices or heating fuel prices could send at least a 5th of our State's population into financial crisis.

Additionally, based on recent statistics, 10.9% of Maine's population lives under the federal poverty line. According to Maine Equal Justice, 35,000 Maine children live in "deep poverty" meaning their families earn less than \$12,000 a year.

maineequaljustice.org/policy/poverty/

If policy is crafted resulting in the unintentional consequence of inflating gas and heating fuel prices, Maine's most vulnerable citizens; the poor, the children, the elderly all will pay the greatest price. What will they sacrifice to stay warm? Food maybe? Housing? Clothing? What?

I urge you to protect Maine's gas and fuel prices and vote "ought to pass" on LD 1498 and protect Maine's vulnerable citizens.