



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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### TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ENVIRONMENT & NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE “An Act To Implement the Most Time-sensitive Recommendations of the Maine Climate Council” L.D. 1429

May 17, 2021

Senator Brenner, Representative Tucker, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

I am Representative Chris Kessler, and I represent District 32, part of South Portland and part of Cape Elizabeth. Today I am testifying Neither For Nor Against **L.D. 1429: An Act To Implement the Most Time-sensitive Recommendations of the Maine Climate Council**. I am speaking as a member of the Energy, Utilities & Technology Committee to relay current activity underway regarding the sections for which your committee requested input.

**Sections 6 & 7** - The committee is currently reviewing detailed proposals to make changes to the Renewable Portfolio Standard via LD 634 and LD 1350. One of these bills would be a more appropriate vessel for consideration of this proposal. These sections also repeal paragraph B of each section, which were put into law last session via LD 1494 to act as a financial safeguard for Maine’s electric ratepayers and to ensure the RPS is working as intended.

**Section 8** - This earmarks the ISO New England Forward Capacity Market funds received by Efficiency Maine to go solely toward high performance heat pumps until 2030, as opposed to the current cutoff of 2025 as recently passed into law. Flexibility in using these funds Efficiency Maine receives is crucial to putting money where it is most needed or most cost-effective at the time. Locking up these funds for one specific purpose for the next nine years may cause unintended consequences as needs are reassessed.



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### **Section 15 - General Fund Appropriations**

EV Accelerator Funding: the committee is considering LD 347 and LD 1579 which deal with electric vehicle adoption and affordable electric rate structures for vehicle charging. One of these bills may be a more appropriate vehicle for funding this effort.

ConnectMaine: LD 1484 has been identified as the bipartisan legislative vessel to expand broadband in rural Maine, and has been amended by the Mills administration to receive \$120 million in ARPA funds.

Weatherization: LD 551 was recently voted 11-1 in favor of boosting this weatherization fund with an additional \$25 million dollar General Fund match of the \$25 million in ARPA funds the Mills administration has earmarked for this purpose. This bill may be the appropriate vessel for this effort.

Heat pumps: Efficiency Maine has devoted numerous funding sources to accelerate the adoption of air source heat pumps with great success thus far. Further analysis is needed to understand if funding levels are insufficient. Our committee would be amenable to doing this analysis.

In closing, all of the sections of this bill that your committee has requested input for are already under careful consideration in the EUT Committee. Representative Dunphy would be welcome to bring these particular proposals to our committee for further consideration as we continue to deliberate these bills.

Thank you for giving us the heads up, and I'd be glad to answer any questions.