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Environment and Natural Resources Committee
Government Oversight Committee

Testimony of Senator Richard A. Bennett

In Support of

LD 1659, An Act To Create the Maine Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator
Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
12 May 2021

Senator Lawrence, Representative Berry and members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology. I am Senator Rick Bennett of Oxford, and I have the honoring of serving 13 towns in Oxford and Cumberland Counties in the Maine Senate. I am pleased to cosponsor LD 1659, “An Act To Create the Maine Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator.”

We are extremely fortunate to live in a state recognized worldwide for its beauty. From our picturesque mountains to our pristine beaches, Mainers enjoy year round access to the outdoors. It is vitally important that we work to protect this resource for generations to come. That is why I support LD 1659. This bill creates the Maine Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator, administered by the Efficiency Maine Trust, to support the development of clean energy and sustainability projects and infrastructure.

One of the biggest barriers to the development of clean energy is the cost. Even though efficiency projects eventually pay for themselves, the average Mainer cannot afford the upfront cost. The Accelerator will provide much needed financing support, including loans, loan guarantees and other financial and risk mitigation products, to assist Mainers interested in taking measures to make their homes more energy efficient. It is important to note that the legislation requires that 40% of the investment activity be directed to serve vulnerable communities.

This legislation could be an important tool as Maine works to reduce our climate-damaging emissions. Even more importantly, access to funding will help thousands of Mainers whose homes desperately need repairs. Every winter we hear from folks whose home are not properly insulated in need a fuel assistance. The Accelerator will be a resource to that families that need assistance.

I urge your favorable consideration of LD 1659, and thank you for your attention.