

January 23, 2024

Honorable Mark Lawrence
Honorable S. Paige Zeigler
Chair, Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
Cross Building, Room 211
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

RE: LD 2077, An Act Regarding Customer Costs and the Environmental and Health Effects of Natural Gas

Dear Chairman Lawrence, Chairman Zeigler and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of Consumer Energy Alliance (CEA) I want to thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments in opposition to LD 2077, An Act Regarding Customer Costs and the Environmental and Health Effects of Natural Gas.

CEA is a nationwide association made up of both energy consumers and producers working to advance all-of-the-above energy and environmental policies that will lower energy costs for every American. CEA supports actions that thoughtfully advance our nation towards a cleaner, more environmentally responsible energy future. We believe that responsible policies always consider the needs of consumers while leveraging and supporting the development of state-of-the-art technologies to improve our environmental stewardship, aiding in the continued reductions of all emissions.

While we respect the intent of the bill's sponsors, we believe that the tacit prohibition on natural gas and other technologies inherent in this legislation is bad policy – as is any de facto ban or moratorium placed on any energy technology or resource as we expressed in our 2021 testimony to this committee opposing LD 101 An Act To Prohibit Offshore Wind Energy Development. Ensuring that families and businesses have broad energy choice – without restrictions – is proving to be the best policy for both the environment, as well as continued affordable and reliable energy.

CEA supports the rights of families and businesses to make their own decisions as to how they power heat and cool their homes, cook their food and power their businesses. This bill could deny them those rights.

This bill also fails to acknowledge two things: (1) the potential for low or zero carbon fuels like Renewable Natural Gas and Hydrogen to substantially contribute to Maine's emission reduction goals; and (2) That this bill may, in fact, not be good for the environment. The United States is a world leader in protecting the environment and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. According to the EPA, from 2005 to 2020, total U.S. energy-related CO2 emissions fell by 19% while global energy-related emissions increased approximately 18% during the same time period. A substantial reason for the emissions

reduction in the US is because of “fuel switching” from higher emitting fuels to lower emitting fuels like natural gas and propane.

One last thing to consider: How will this bill impact the reliability of Maine’s electricity grid? The North American Electric Reliability, which is the entity responsible for overseeing the reliable operation of our nation’s electricity grids have repeatedly expressed concerns: “We are facing an absolute step change in the risk environment surrounding reliability and energy assurance,” said John Moura, NERC’s director of Reliability Assessment and Performance Analysis, “In recent years, we’ve witnessed a decline in reliability, and the future projection does not offer a clear path to securing the reliable electricity supply that is essential for the health, safety, and prosperity of our communities.”

I want to reiterate and be clear – CEA wants to see a clean future with lower emissions. However, that shouldn’t come at the expense of Mainer’s ability to choose the appliances and energy systems that work best for them. Attempts to ban natural gas or other fuels by prohibiting infrastructure development will lead to higher costs to Maine’s consumers and less reliable electricity grid and energy deliver system as a whole, with little or no meaningful environmental benefit.

For these reasons, we ask you to oppose LD 2077.

Respectfully,



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