

Testimony Template: In SUPPORT of: “An Act Regarding Customer Costs and the Environmental and Health Effects of Natural Gas” LD 2077



Hearing and Submission Information:

The public hearing is **January 23rd at 1pm**. There are multiple ways to participate: (a) you can present testimony in-person during the public hearing at the State House, (b) testify during the public hearing on Zoom, or (c) submit written testimony online.

If submitting written testimony and/or signing up to testify on Zoom:

1. Go to this [website](#)
2. Click “Energy, Utilities and Technology” from the drop-down list of Committees
3. Choose “January 23rd, 1pm” as the date
4. Click “LD 2077, “An Act Regarding Customer Costs and Environmental and Health Effects of Natural Gas”
5. Upload your testimony as a PDF or copy-and-paste into the box.
6. Done! Spread the word, get others to do this!

If attending in person: Bring 20 copies of your testimony. Spoken testimony will probably be limited to three minutes.

When: Monday, 1/23, 1pm

Where: In front of the Joint-Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology in room 211 of the Cross Building in the State House Complex in Augusta

Testimony Template:

1/23/2024

To: Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee

From: *Megan Sauberlich*

Re: Testimony in Support of LD 2077 “An Act Regarding Customer Costs and Environmental and Health Effects of Natural Gas”

Senator Lawrence, Representative Ziegler and the esteemed members of the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee: My name is *Megan Sauberlich*, I am a resident of Falmouth, and a *student activist* with Maine Youth Action. I am [speaking] in support of LD 2077, An Act Regarding Customer Costs and Environmental and Health Effects of Natural Gas.

The numbers of deaths, illnesses, and worsening climate catastrophes are not just reports to scan over and decide whether they are worthy of attention. These statistics represent the people that this building was made for. LD 2077 strives to raise our standards for our health, economy, and environment that we want to be handing off to future Mainers.

With the goal to optimize cleaner utilities and prohibit the profit of toxic gasses from polluting Maine residents, this bill accounts for a responsibility that has been disregarded, and paid with a number of healthy lives. LD 2077 is the forefront of a necessary systematic change and Maine Youth Action is actively seeking action on issues that don't need to transpire for future generations. We have the information, and this bill creates the momentum to finally move towards healthier living.

Numerous states have taken initiative in phasing out natural gas. Phasing out Natural Gas is not impossible, nor infeasible but it does need attention.

Respectfully Submitted,

Megan Sauberlich

Talking Points:

- LD 2077 is a bill to protect Mainers. This Act is an opportunity to address the health, financial and environmental issues resulting from gas utilities' pollution of residential and commercial buildings.
- The World Health Organization has reported on numerous health disorders (acute and chronic respiratory diseases, tuberculosis, asthma, cardiovascular disease and prenatal health outcomes) caused by indoor gas utilities. (WHO, 2007). [Health impacts of indoor air pollution from household solid fuel on children and women - ScienceDirect](#) Gas stoves produce higher levels of nitrogen oxide—a toxic gas—which may worsen existing respiratory problems and

cause learning and memory deficits. Studies also reveal children are especially susceptible to the effects of indoor pollution.

The industry's response has been to pitch fossil gas alternatives ("FGAs"), including biomethane and hydrogen. However, these alternative fuels face major cost and supply limitations, and raise environmental justice and emissions concerns.

- In fact, Hydrogen-based, low-temperature heating systems consume 500% to 600% more renewable energy than heat pumps.
- People spend about 90% of their time indoors. In this time, significant amounts of natural gas are emitted as unburned methane, a greenhouse gas, with an estimated 75 percent of the emissions occurring when household appliances are shut off. This bill will take action on health standards for residential and commercial areas that should not be ignored.
- Maine will also benefit from the financial implications of phasing out natural gas. California eliminated subsidies for developers to connect new properties to the gas system in July 2023, a move that will save gas customers an estimated \$160 million per year.
- [Net Zero America](#) study by researchers at Princeton University produced several forecasts on improvements in air quality, showing cumulative action to phase out natural gas saves more than 42,000 lives annually. When we have safer and even more affordable alternatives to transform our, and future generations health, these options should be researched and implemented as much as needed to create a safer environment for Maine citizens.
- The goal to cut emissions significantly by 2050 is being prioritized by many states. The transition to cheaper, less pollutive infrastructure, marks the future of a new energy system. In addition to California, Illinois, Colorado and Washington have taken legislative incentives to implement cleaner energy standards, planning for the future of electrification. This transformation renders virtually all new pipeline investments useless decades before their 80+ year expected lifetimes.
- By addressing numerous health and climate concerns, LD 2077, will cover the social and climate costs gas utility companies have ignored for too long and allow Maine to prepare for the evolving energy system
- [Why All Electric Homes are a Win for Consumers and the Climate - Green Coast](#)
- [Goodbye Gas? The Benefits of Phasing Out Natural Gas in Homes – EcoBlock \(berkeley.edu\)](#)