

March 20, 2025

Re: Legislative Document (LD) 556

COMMENTS OF THE NATIONAL PROPANE GAS ASSOCIATION

On behalf of the National Propane Gas Association (NPGA), which represents propane marketers, wholesalers, suppliers, distributors, and equipment manufacturers across Maine, we appreciate the opportunity to voice our strong support for Legislative Document (LD) 556, An Act to Preserve Heating and Energy Choice by Prohibiting a Municipality from Prohibiting a Particular Energy System or Energy Distributor. Maine’s propane industry provides thousands of good-paying jobs and generates more than \$616 million in economic activity annually.¹ Maine supports a robust propane marketplace, with more than 16 percent of households relying on propane for their space heating needs, which is four-times higher than the national average.²

LD 556 is common-sense legislation to ensure that a municipality cannot prohibit access to a heating or energy source (or energy system) used in residential homes and commercial buildings, simply based upon the type of energy that is supplied to the end-user. Furthermore, local governments are barred from adopting regulations that bar access to the “energy needs of a motor vehicle.” To be clear, nothing in LD 556 forces Mainers to use any particular energy source. Instead, it just makes sure local officials are not mandating that homes and businesses use any specific energy source, regardless of extenuating circumstances, such as economics, convenience, or personal preference. These government fiats artificially distort the energy marketplace in an anticompetitive manner and deny consumers the ability to choose their preferred energy source for their particular situation. State energy choice protections promote fairness and competition in the marketplace, which benefits all energy consumers. Restricting access to energy options is the exact wrong approach to take as families continue to combat historic inflation.

Maine is in Climate Zones 6 and 7, the two coldest zones in the contiguous U.S. Homeowners need access to reliable and cost-effective thermal fuels, like propane, to keep their dwellings sufficiently warm during the long, cold heating season. And even more so in a state like Maine, where residential electricity rates are far higher than the national average.³

Furthermore, given the state’s size, low population density, and harsh climate, transportation and mobility are not just niceties, but life-impacting necessities. Mainers themselves are best positioned to determine what type of mobile engine fuels suit their unique needs, individual circumstances, and lifestyle. Importantly, LD 556 safeguards consumer access to internal combustion vehicles, including those powered by clean-burning propane.

Energy freedom and consumer choice are matters of statewide concern, and should be treated as such. The propane industry stands ready to hire more workers and make additional business investments across

¹ Propane’s Impact on Economy: 2021 Maine, National Propane Gas Association, (2024), https://www.npga.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Maine_2024.pdf

² Highlights for space heating fuel in U.S. homes by state, 2020, U.S. Energy Information Administration, (March 2023), <https://www.eia.gov/consumption/residential/data/2020/state/pdf/State%20Space%20Heating%20Fuels.pdf>

³ Average Price of Electricity to Ultimate End-Use Sector, Energy Information Administration, (2023), https://www.eia.gov/electricity/annual/html/epa_02_10.html



the Pine Tree State, but we do need a level of assurance that we won't be arbitrarily or artificially removed as an energy option in the market. Propane marketers simply want the ability to compete for customers. Again, NPGA strongly supports LD 556. Lawmakers should trust their own constituents to make their own energy decisions and support energy choice and passage of this vital legislation.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comment.

Respectfully submitted,

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