

# SUPPORT

## **An Act to Improve Maine's Economy and Lower Energy Costs Through Energy Efficiency**

**Sponsor:** Senator BOYLE of Cumberland.

**Co-Sponsors:** TBD (Bill not printed yet)

**Summary:** (Final details still being developed.) The purpose of the bill is to increase investment in—and savings from—energy efficiency for all fuels, for homeowners and for businesses. The bill directs the Public Utilities Commission to ensure that electric ratepayers benefit from (“acquire”) all efficiency savings that are achievable and cost-effective (i.e., will lower costs for ratepayers). The bill also reduces bureaucracy that limits ratepayer savings; updates Efficiency Maine’s energy saving goals so that they are ambitious but achievable; and makes sure that Maine’s efficiency programs have adequate resources to help save heating oil, along with electricity and natural gas.

**Explanation:** Maine invests less per capita on energy efficiency than almost every other New England state. The Efficiency Maine program has identified ways that we could reduce energy costs by hundreds of millions of dollars if we pursued easily achievable and cost effective efficiency programs. So what’s standing in the way of increasing our investment in energy efficiency? Part of the problem is politics, and part of the problem is a broken system for making decisions about energy efficiency. Both problems could be fixed this session with passage of this bill.

It costs less than half as much to save a kilowatt hour of electricity as it does to buy a kilowatt hour. In an apples-to-apples comparison, energy efficiency is the cheapest source of energy available. But, despite this fact, Maine decision makers have balked at taking steps to capture those savings. Maine is falling further and further behind other states on efficiency savings, not just in New England, but across the country. This bill would ensure that ratepayers pay as little on their energy bills as possible, by ensuring that Maine maximizes its investments in energy efficiency improvements that save money and reduce costs.

Efficiency Maine could help 40,000 more Mainers save 20-40% on their *heating bills* if the State invested more in heating oil efficiency and weatherization. Acquiring all cost-effective energy efficiency can increase the Gross State Product by \$760 million by 2020 and create several hundred new jobs. We have proven approaches that work to leverage private investment and help homeowners save oil, gas and electricity. It’s time to ramp-up energy efficiency and save Mainers more money. Every year we delay costs the Maine economy tens of millions of dollars.

Energy efficiency should be a bipartisan solution. Republican Governor of Oklahoma Mary Fallin said in 2012: “Energy *inefficiency* wastes natural resources and tax dollars that could otherwise be used for essential services like education, transportation, and public safety. Thanks to efficiency programs by our state utilities, state tax incentives for more energy-efficient construction, and our state plan to achieve 20 percent energy savings by 2020 among all state agencies and entities, Oklahoma is leading the way on energy conservation.”

**NRCM supports passage of *An Act to Improve Maine's Economy and Lower Energy Costs Through Energy Efficiency***