



**Written Testimony of Jess Maurer on Behalf of
the Maine Council on Aging to the
Committee on Judiciary**

**In Favor of LD 860 – An Act to Require Competitive
Electricity Providers to Provide Certain Information
to the Public Advocate**

Written Testimony Provided on March 18, 2025

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and the members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology.

My name is Jess Maurer, and I am the Executive Director of the Maine Council on Aging (MCOA). The MCOA is a broad, multidisciplinary network of over 140 organizations, businesses, municipalities, and older community members working to ensure we can all live healthy, engaged and secure lives with choices and opportunities as we age at home and in community settings.

In my official capacity, I serve on the Maine Electric Ratepayer Advisory Council. I am testifying in favor of LD 860, which proposes to require competitive electricity providers (CEPs) to share copies of reports with the Public Advocate that they file with the Public Utilities Commission, and allows the Public Advocate to make recommendations to the Commission or the Legislature, including related to the reasonableness of rates charged by a CEP.

In a report entitled *Is Maine's CEP-Served Residential Retail Electric Supply Market Affordable?* prepared for the Electric Ratepayer Advisory Council and published in December 2024, the authors found that CEP customers overpay substantially for electric supply. It reports that while some customers may pay less for some periods of time, overall customers pay vastly more for CEP electricity than if they had purchased electricity through standard offer service.

More troubling, the report found that households participating in the Low-Income Assistance Program (LIAP) are more likely to purchase electricity from CEPs than are other households, and CEPs charge LIAP households, on average, slightly more than they charge other households.

An energy burden study issued at the same time finds that low-income Maine households face high electricity burdens. For these households, the electricity burden is 8% of household income versus the goal of 4%. This report estimates 200,000 households in Maine are facing unaffordable home energy burdens.

While the data used to create the energy burden study did not include age-band data, it's not difficult to connect the dots to say a large percentage of lower-income older Mainers are impacted by the findings in both reports. For instance, nearly half of all Maine households include a person over 60. In addition, about a third of older Mainers live on Social Security alone (no retirement savings), with an average annual income of about \$20,800.

Older Mainers most impacted by the findings in these two studies are older women living alone. Older women in Maine are twice as likely to live alone than men, and are more likely to have incomes at or below 100% of the FPL. Over half the 75,000+ older women who live alone in Maine do not have enough money to meet their basic needs.

These reports taken together suggest to us that older low-income Mainers are more likely to be charged more for their electricity and more likely to experience a significantly higher energy burdened than those with more resources. These reports were generated from publicly available data. More data is needed to do further analysis about why this is and what we can do to shift the burden. LD 860 would make more data available, and would authorize the Public Advocate to consider this data to make recommendations to the Legislature and Commission. We urge you to support it.

Thank you. Jess Maurer