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Testimony of GrowSmart Maine in support of LD 1094, An Act To Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue To Reduce Homeowner and Municipal Energy Bills through Increased Efficiency and Weatherization Projects

April 21, 2021

Senator Breen, Representative Pierce, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs,

My name is Nancy Smith. I live in Monmouth and I am the Executive Director of GrowSmart Maine. We are a statewide non-partisan organization working to create lasting prosperity without sacrificing the quality of life that defines Maine. We support policies, programs and projects that define and protect the value of our unique built and natural places while supporting long term economic opportunity.

It is with this intention we support this bond proposal, based in large part on our outreach with the [Energy Efficiency Community Campaign](#). This project is a partnership with Island Institute and AmeriCorps/Maine Campus Compact, bringing the insights of the Island Institute's report, [Bridging the Rural Efficiency Gap](#), to communities outside their direct service area. Our goal is to meet Mainers where they are when it comes to climate action, with immediate meaningful outcomes in weatherizing twenty five homes in Windham and Biddeford. Weatherization reduces Maine's reliance on fossil fuels, given our dependence on heating oil. This smart investment in turn reduces greenhouse gas emissions and also saves Mainers money.

We endorse the two beneficiaries of this bond as appropriate investments for public dollars. There was a time in my adult life when my family used the Low Income Housing Energy Assistance program to make ends meet. Allowing families like mine to access funds to also REDUCE their need for heating fuel is an empowering long term strategy. Municipalities and schools are wise investments as well, reducing fiscal costs so that their dollars could be reallocated to other investments, or to reduce property taxes. We also support the pending amendment from the sponsor directing funding to Maine Housing and Efficiency Maine based on their respective customer bases.

Best,



Nancy E Smith
Executive Director