

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

Legislative Document

No. 1967

H.P. 1311

House of Representatives, May 13, 2025

Resolve, to Establish the Maine Home Energy Navigator and Coaching Pilot Program

Reference to the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert B. Hunt".

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative KESSLER of South Portland.

1 **Sec. 1. Maine Home Energy Navigator and Coaching Pilot Program**
2 **established. Resolved:** That the Maine Office of Community Affairs, referred to in this
3 resolve as "the office," in consultation with the Efficiency Maine Trust, the Maine State
4 Housing Authority and the Governor's Energy Office, shall establish the Maine Home
5 Energy Navigator and Coaching Pilot Program, referred to in this resolve as "the pilot
6 program." The pilot program must be designed as a 2-year program to support energy
7 efficiency for residential properties, enhance consumer protection and expand access to
8 energy assistance programs, particularly for low-income and underserved communities.
9 The office shall act as the administrator of the pilot program.

10 **Sec. 2. Pilot program design and objectives. Resolved:** That the pilot program
11 must be designed to select between 2 and 5 municipal or nonprofit organizations through a
12 competitive solicitation process to provide community-based energy coaching services to
13 residential consumers as described by this section. Coaching services offered through the
14 pilot program must be designed to:

15 1. Provide homeowners with in-person or remote home energy assessments.
16 Assessments must be conducted in accordance with standards developed by the Building
17 Performance Institute to identify energy-saving opportunities and assess current home
18 performance.

19 The pilot program must require that the individual performing an inspection pursuant to
20 this subsection is trained and certified by the Building Performance Institute or another
21 similar and nationally recognized credentialing organization to ensure accuracy and
22 reliability in assessments;

23 2. If applicable, provide homeowners with an independent, 3rd-party analysis of
24 contractor recommendations to verify the validity, cost-effectiveness and expected energy
25 savings of proposed improvements;

26 3. Provide education and guidance to homeowners, including:

27 A. Education on the benefits of energy efficiency improvements and how to interpret
28 energy assessment reports;

29 B. Helping homeowners, especially those in low-income and underserved
30 communities, to understand and navigate options to meet their home energy needs
31 affordably;

32 C. Advising homeowners on accessing available grants, rebates, financing and other
33 assistance programs and incentives to meet their home energy needs;

34 D. Assisting homeowners in identifying and prioritizing energy-saving opportunities;

35 E. Guiding homeowners in finding and selecting qualified contractors, including
36 certified energy auditors or installers; and

37 F. Helping homeowners review and analyze contractor recommendations regarding
38 cost, payment and other relevant factors; and

39 4. Engage in community outreach efforts to improve the accessibility and inclusivity
40 of energy efficiency programs in this State. In pursuit of these efforts, the pilot program
41 must work with community-based organizations and tribal governments to ensure that
42 outreach efforts reach underserved communities in this State.

Sec. 3. Funding. Resolved: That the office shall use existing funds as available and seek additional funding sources, including federal grants and private partnerships, to support the pilot program. Financial support may be provided to nonprofit organizations selected to participate in the pilot program for the direct costs of energy coaching. Up to 20% of the financial support provided to a nonprofit organization under this subsection may be used for indirect costs associated with energy coaching. The office may also provide in-kind support, such as technical assistance and educational materials, to nonprofit organizations selected to participate in the pilot program. The office may coordinate with other state agencies, nonprofit organizations, community organizations and tribal governments to maximize the pilot program's reach and effectiveness.

Sec. 4. Report. Resolved: That the office shall submit a comprehensive report on the pilot program to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over energy and utilities matters by June 30, 2027. The report must include, at a minimum:

1. The number of homeowners served by the pilot program;
2. The number of homeowners served by the pilot program who have completed or are in the process of implementing energy upgrades in their homes;
3. The types and number of energy efficiency upgrades installed;
4. Estimates of energy saved as a result of energy efficiency upgrades installed under the pilot program, measured by quantity and cost of energy saved over 20 years;
5. Information concerning the income of the households served under the pilot program;
6. Consumer feedback;
7. A summary of outreach efforts to underserved communities;
8. A detailed summary of pilot program costs, including the total cost of the pilot program and a breakdown of pilot program costs expended:
 - A. By each organization selected for participation in the pilot program;
 - B. Per community served;
 - C. Per home for which a homeowner received coaching services; and
 - D. Per home upgraded after participating in the pilot program;
9. An analysis of costs, benefits, opportunities and challenges associated with the potential expansion of the pilot program statewide; and
10. Recommendations for pilot program continuation, expansion, modification or related policy changes.

Sec. 5. Implementation. Resolved: That the pilot program must commence no later than October 1, 2025.

SUMMARY

This resolve directs the Maine Office of Community Affairs to establish the Maine Home Energy Navigator and Coaching Pilot Program to support energy efficiency of residential properties, enhance consumer protection and expand access to energy assistance programs, particularly for low-income and underserved communities. The pilot program

1 will perform in-person and remote home energy assessments to identify energy-saving
2 opportunities and assess current home performance and, if applicable, provide an
3 independent, 3rd-party analysis of contractor recommendations; educate homeowners
4 about the benefits of energy efficiency improvements; help low-income homeowners and
5 homeowners in underserved communities understand and navigate their options to
6 affordably meet their home energy needs; and engage in community outreach efforts to
7 improve the accessibility and inclusivity of energy efficiency programs in this State. The
8 pilot program must commence no later than October 1, 2025.

9 The resolve requires the Maine Office of Community Affairs to submit by June 30,
10 2027 to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over energy and
11 utilities matters a report including a summary of the pilot program's outcomes and any
12 recommendations for continuing, expanding or modifying the pilot program.

13 The Maine Office of Community Affairs is required to use existing funds to support
14 the pilot program and may seek additional funding from various sources to support the pilot
15 program's implementation. Financial support may be provided to nonprofit organizations
16 selected to participate in the pilot program for the direct costs of energy coaching, and up
17 to 20% of the financial support may be used for indirect costs associated with energy
18 coaching. The Maine Office of Community Affairs may also provide in-kind support, such
19 as technical assistance and educational materials, to nonprofit organizations selected to
20 participate in the pilot program.