

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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SECOND REGULAR SESSION

ONE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH LEGISLATURE

Legislative Document

No. 2102

H. P. 2038

House of Representatives, January 24, 1978

Filed by the Joint Standing Committee on Energy under Joint Rule 17.

EDWIN H. PERT, Clerk

STATE OF MAINE

IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD NINETEEN HUNDRED
SEVENTY-EIGHT

AN ACT to Establish a Solar Water Heater Demonstration Program for Maine.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine, as follows:

Sec. 1. 5 MRSA § 5005, sub-§ 1, ¶ G, as repealed and replaced by PL 1975, c. 587, § 2, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

G. Encourage and direct or sponsor research, experiments, and demonstration projects within the State to develop alternate energy sources, particularly, but not limited to, those sources which rely on the renewable natural resources of the State, such as solar energy, the water of the tides and rivers, the forests, the winds and other sources which to date have not been fully explored or utilized;

Sec. 2. Appropriation. The following funds shall be appropriated from the General Fund to carry out the purposes of this Act:

1978-79

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

Office of Energy Resources

All Other

\$25,000

Establishes a fund to implement a solar water heater demonstration program. The fund provides for the administration of 50 or more grants of

\$400 each to qualified applicants for the installation of solar water heating systems. The Director of the Office of Energy Resources shall provide grants to home builders, homeowners, schools and hospitals that demonstrate intent to install solar water heating systems and that meet any other qualifications deemed necessary by the Office of Energy Resources. No person, firm or institution shall be eligible for more than one \$400 grant.

In the event that other public or private moneys become available to establish such a solar water heater demonstration program, they shall be used to expand the program.

STATEMENT OF FACT

The State has failed to qualify for participation in federal solar water heating demonstrations based on the cost of electricity in the State. Since electricity costs are the sole criteria for determining participation in the federal solar heating programs, it is doubtful that Maine will qualify for these programs in the future. Maine's electricity costs were the 11th highest in the nation on January 1, 1977, and the 10 states with higher electric rates were chosen to participate in the solar heating demonstration. Maine is the only New England state to be omitted from the program.

According to the United States government publication entitled "Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1976," Maine ranked 41st in the country in regard to per capita income. As a result, Maine citizens are at a greater disadvantage in regard to electricity costs than most of the citizens in the 10 states selected by the Federal Government to participate in the program.

The intent of this bill is to encourage alternate sources of energy by means of promoting the installation of solar water heating systems in Maine. This bill will provide a \$400 grant to persons and institutions which show intent and demonstrate the ability to install solar water heating systems.