

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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119th MAINE LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION-2000

Legislative Document

No. 2343

H.P. 1677

House of Representatives, January 5, 2000

**An Act to Make a One-time Energy Appropriation to Support Shortfalls
in the Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program.**

(EMERGENCY)

Approved for introduction by a majority of the Legislative Council pursuant to Joint Rule 203.

Reference to the Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph W. Mayo".

JOSEPH W. MAYO, Clerk

Presented by Representative BERRY of Livermore.
Cosponsored by Senator MICHAUD of Penobscot and
Representatives: DUDLEY of Portland, MURPHY of Kennebunk, NASS of Acton, Speaker
ROWE of Portland, SAXL of Portland.

2 **Emergency preamble.** Whereas, Acts of the Legislature do not
3 become effective until 90 days after adjournment unless enacted
4 as emergencies; and

5 **Whereas,** heating oil prices are expected to rise more than
6 30% this winter due to supply restrictions imposed by the
7 Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, OPEC, and
8 increased demand for oil by Asian and South American economies;
9 and

10 **Whereas,** the United States Department of Commerce, National
11 Weather Service, has predicted that the winter of 1999-2000 will
12 be colder in the northeastern portion of the United States than
13 was the case during the previous 2 winters; and

14 **Whereas,** the federal Low-income Home Energy Assistance
15 Program, LIHEAP, that provides financial assistance to eligible
16 low-income households to assist in paying winter heating costs
17 will provide Maine with virtually the same level of funding for
18 the winter of 1999-2000 as was provided during the winters of
19 1997-98 and 1998-99; and

20 **Whereas,** a colder winter in 1999-2000 will cause low-income
21 households receiving LIHEAP benefits that burn fuel oil for their
22 heat to need greater amounts of oil to maintain an indoor
23 temperature comparable to last winter; and

24 **Whereas,** a colder winter will cause more low-income
25 households to apply for LIHEAP assistance this winter than
26 applied during the winter of 1998-99; and

27 **Whereas,** the available LIHEAP funding for Maine is likely to
28 be insufficient to provide benefits to all eligible applicants
29 without emergency supplementary funding from the State during the
30 winter heating season, leaving many low-income Maine families at
31 risk of hypothermia and the health and safety consequences of
32 inadequate heat; and

33 **Whereas,** in the judgment of the Legislature, these facts
34 create an emergency within the meaning of the Constitution of
35 Maine and require the following legislation as immediately
36 necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and
37 safety; now, therefore,

38
39 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

40 **Sec. 1. Appropriation.** The following funds are appropriated
41 from the General Fund to carry out the purposes of this Act.
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50 **1999-00**

2 **MAINE STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY**

4 **Low-income Home Energy Assistance**
6 **Program**

8 All Other \$4,500,000

10 Provides one-time funds for the Low-income
12 Home Energy Assistance Program in
 anticipation of a projected shortfall during
 the 1999-2000 winter season.

14 **Emergency clause.** In view of the emergency cited in the
16 preamble, this Act takes effect when approved.

18 **SUMMARY**

20 This bill provides a one-time General Fund appropriation of
22 \$4,500,000 to the Maine State Housing Authority for the
 Low-income Home Energy Assistance Program in anticipation of a
 projected shortfall during the 1999-2000 winter season.