

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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120th MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2001

Legislative Document

No. 831

H.P. 631

House of Representatives, February 15, 2001

An Act to Establish a Circuit Breaker Program for Fuel Assistance.

Reference to the Committee on Taxation suggested and ordered printed.

Millicent M. MacFarland

MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND, Clerk

Presented by Representative TUTTLE of Sanford.
Cosponsored by Senator FERGUSON of Oxford and
Representatives: BERRY of Belmont, COLWELL of Gardiner, GOODWIN of Pembroke,
HALL of Bristol, McGLOCKLIN of Embden, NORBERT of Portland, SAVAGE of Buxton,
Speaker SAXL of Portland.

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

4 **Sec. 1. 36 MRSA §6201, first ¶**, as amended by PL 1991, c. 824,
Pt. A, §80, is further amended to read:

6 As Except as provided in section 6220-A, as used in this
chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following
8 terms have the following meanings.

10 **Sec. 2. 36 MRSA §6205**, as enacted by PL 1987, c. 516, §§3 and
6, is repealed and the following enacted in its place:

12 **§6205. One claim per household**

14 One claim is allowed for a household or homestead per year
16 for relief from property taxes under sections 6201 to 6220 except
for the provisions of section 6201, subsection 2, and an
18 additional claim is allowed for a household or homestead per year
for relief from heating fuel costs under section 6220-A, except
20 for the provisions of section 6220-A, subsection 1, paragraph B.

22 **Sec. 3. 36 MRSA §6220-A** is enacted to read:

24 **§6220-A. Maine Heating Fuel Assistance Program**

26 The Maine Heating Fuel Assistance Program is established as
a supplemental program under the Maine Residents Property Tax
28 Program to provide reimbursement to taxpayers for heating fuel
costs. Except where otherwise noted, standards for the Maine
30 Residents Property Tax Program apply to this section.

32 **1. Definitions.** Notwithstanding the provisions of section
6201, as used in this section, unless the context otherwise
34 indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

36 A. "Benefit base" means the total amount of heating fuel
costs paid by a claimant during the year.

38 B. "Claimant" means a person who has filed a claim under
40 this section, who was domiciled in the State and who paid
heating fuel costs to heat that domicile during the year for
42 which relief is requested. If 2 or more persons from the
same household meet the qualifications under this paragraph,
44 each person may apply on the basis of the amount of heating
fuel costs paid by that person.

46 **2. Readability; application; instructions.** The application
48 form and instructions used by claimants under this section must
have a readability score, as determined by a recognized

2 instrument for measuring adult literacy levels, equivalent to no
3 higher than a grade 6 reading level.

4 3. Outreach plan required. The bureau shall develop and
5 implement a plan of outreach to ensure that all eligible
6 households are made aware of assistance available under this
7 section.

8 4. Coordination required. The bureau shall seek the advice
9 and cooperation of the Department of Human Services, Bureau of
10 Elder and Adult Services, Bureau of Family Independence and
11 Bureau of Child and Family Services; advocates for elderly and
12 low-income individuals; and other interested agencies and
13 organizations in developing the application form and instructions
14 for the program and the outreach plan required by subsection 3.
15

18 SUMMARY

20 This bill creates the Maine Heating Fuel Assistance Program
21 to provide reimbursement for heating fuel costs to taxpayers.
22 The Maine Heating Fuel Assistance Program is modeled after and
23 administered under the Maine Residents Property Tax Program
24 within the Department of Administrative and Financial Services,
25 Bureau of Revenue Services for eligibility requirements and
26 benefits to claimants.