

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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131st MAINE LEGISLATURE

FIRST REGULAR SESSION-2023

Legislative Document

No. 1437

H.P. 933

House of Representatives, March 30, 2023

**An Act to Address Poverty by Increasing Access to Energy
Efficiency and Weatherization Programs**

Reference to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources suggested and ordered printed.

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

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative WARREN of Scarborough.
Cosponsored by Representative: Speaker TALBOT ROSS of Portland.

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

2 **Sec. 1. 38 MRSA §577-A, sub-§10**, as enacted by PL 2019, c. 476, §9, is amended
3 to read:

4 **10. Report.** Beginning January 15, 2021, and annually thereafter, the council shall
5 submit a report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over
6 environment and natural resources matters describing the activities of the council, the
7 subcommittee and its working groups over the prior calendar year and including any
8 findings and recommendations of the council, including any proposed legislation. The
9 report must include specific recommendations to assist low-income residents of the State.
10 After reviewing the report, the joint standing committee may report out legislation to
11 implement any recommendations contained in the report.

12 **Sec. 2. Rules relating to home energy assistance programs.** The Department
13 of Health and Human Services, the Maine State Housing Authority and the Efficiency
14 Maine Trust shall amend their rules as necessary to ensure that the Home Energy Assistance
15 Program and federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program resources are
16 distributed in the most expedited manner possible.

17 **Sec. 3. Rules relating to energy efficiency programs.** The Efficiency Maine
18 Trust and the Maine State Housing Authority shall amend their rules as necessary to more
19 fully address the needs of low-income individuals relating to energy efficiency programs,
20 including, but not limited to, by amending their rules to remove the term "low-income"
21 from home energy assistance program materials, add cooling pumps to references to
22 heating pumps and authorize mobile homes built after 1976 to qualify for weatherization
23 assistance programs. The Efficiency Maine Trust and the Maine State Housing Authority
24 shall consult each other and the Maine Climate Council in the adoption of rules pursuant
25 to this section. The Efficiency Maine Trust and the Maine State Housing Authority shall
26 jointly submit a report to the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and
27 Technology no later than December 6, 2023 with recommendations, including suggested
28 legislation, for any statutory changes needed to implement this section.

29 **Sec. 4. Rules relating to energy efficiency and weatherization services.** The
30 Efficiency Maine Trust and the Maine State Housing Authority shall amend their rules as
31 necessary to prioritize programming that combines energy efficiency and weatherization
32 services, including prioritizing the distribution of state funds, private funds and bond
33 measures for that programming and requiring energy auditors to recommend sustainable
34 heating solutions, including heating and cooling pumps.

35 **Sec. 5. Rules relating to weatherization assistance programs and social**
36 **services.** The Efficiency Maine Trust and the Maine State Housing Authority shall amend
37 their rules to combine weatherization assistance programs with social services, when
38 reasonable and feasible, in circumstances that result in a net savings of state funds and that
39 advance social equity.

40 **SUMMARY**

41 This bill requires the Maine Climate Council to include in its annual report specific
42 recommendations to assist low-income residents of the State. The bill also directs the
43 Department of Health and Human Services, the Maine State Housing Authority and the

- 1 Efficiency Maine Trust to amend their rules relating to home energy assistance programs,
- 2 energy efficiency programs and weatherization assistance programs.