ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY

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STATE OF MAINE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

131ST LEGISLATURE

SECOND REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE AMENDMENT “      ” to H.P. 1336, L.D. 2077, “An Act Regarding Customer Costs and the Environmental and Health Effects of Natural Gas”

Amend the bill by striking out the title and substituting the following:

'Resolve, to Study the Role of Natural Gas in an Equitable Clean Energy Transition for Maine'

Amend the bill by striking out everything after the title and inserting the following:

PART A

Sec. A-1. Public Utilities Commission inquiry. Resolved: That, by October 1, 2024, the Public Utilities Commission shall conduct an inquiry that includes, but is not limited to, an evaluation of investment planning undertaken by gas utilities and consideration of a framework for commission oversight of future investments made by gas utilities. In conducting its inquiry, the commission shall consider:

1. The requirements of the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35-A, section 103-A;

2. The policy of beneficial electrification under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35-A, chapter 38; and

3. The goals established by the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35-A, section 3210, subsection 1-A, the state energy plan under Title 2, section 9, subsection 3, paragraph C and the climate action plan adopted pursuant to Title 38, section 577.

Sec. A-2. Report. Resolved: That, by December 1, 2025, the Public Utilities Commission shall submit a report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over utility matters that includes an overview of the inquiry required pursuant to section 1 of this Part, a summary of any actions the commission plans to take as well as any recommendations for legislation. The committee may report out a bill related to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

PART B
Sec. B-1. Governor's Energy Office evaluation. Resolved: That the Governor's Energy Office shall, in consultation with the Public Utilities Commission, review and evaluate:

1. The current use of natural gas in meeting the existing energy needs of the residential, commercial, institutional, industrial and power generation sectors in the State;
2. The role of natural gas in ensuring the energy security of manufacturers and large commercial customers and in providing employment for residents of the State;
3. Policy and regulatory activities concerning natural gas utilities in other states and concerning the role of existing gas infrastructure in supporting the transition to a low-carbon future;
4. New and emerging technologies for the production, transportation, delivery and storage of natural gas; and
5. New and emerging technologies that may enable alternative cost-effective uses of existing natural gas infrastructure consistent with the requirements of the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 38, section 576-A and the climate action plan adopted pursuant to Title 38, section 577, including, but not limited to, renewable natural gas, clean hydrogen and district geothermal technologies.

The Governor's Energy Office shall encourage interested stakeholders to submit relevant information to inform the evaluation required under this section.

Sec. B-2. Report. Resolved: That, by December 1, 2025, the Governor's Energy Office shall submit a report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over utility matters that includes an overview of the evaluation required pursuant to section 1 of this Part and any recommendations for legislation. The committee may report out a bill related to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

PART C


Sec. C-2. Membership. Resolved: That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the commission consists of 13 members appointed as follows:

1. One member of the Senate, appointed by the President of the Senate;
2. One member of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House;
3. Four public members, 2 of whom must be from or represent interests in the northern part of the State, appointed by the President of the Senate as follows:
   A. An individual representing the environmental justice community;
   B. An individual representing a labor organization whose workers are employed in the energy industry;
   C. A representative of a business that is a large-scale user of energy in the State; and
D. An individual representing the interests of the fishing industry in the State;
4. Four public members appointed by the Speaker of the House as follows:
   A. An individual representing the frontline community;
   B. An individual representing the interests of the renewable energy industry;
   C. An individual representing the interests of the energy industry who is not in the renewable energy industry; and
   D. An individual representing a registered apprenticeship program under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 26, chapter 37 or a joint committee as described in Title 26, section 3201, subsection 4, paragraph A; and
5. Three ex officio members as follows:
   A. The Commissioner of Labor or the commissioner's designee;
   B. The Director of the Governor's Energy Office or the director's designee; and
   C. The Commissioner of Economic and Community Development or the commissioner's designee.

For the purposes of this section, "frontline community" means a community that is the most vulnerable to and will be the most adversely affected by climate change and inequitable actions because of systemic and historical socioeconomic disparities, environmental injustice or other forms of injustice.

Sec. C-3. Chairs; quorum. Resolved: That the Senate member is the Senate chair and the House of Representatives member is the House chair of the commission. A quorum is 7 members, and a quorum must be present to start a meeting but is not required to continue a meeting.

Sec. C-4. Appointments; convening of commission. Resolved: That all appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative Council once all appointments have been made. When the appointment of all members has been completed, the chairs of the commission shall call and convene the first meeting of the commission. If 30 days or more after the effective date of this resolve a majority of but not all appointments have been made, the chairs may request authority and the Legislative Council may grant authority for the commission to meet and conduct its business.

Sec. C-5. Duties. Resolved: That the commission shall:

1. Review and evaluate the State's current energy workforce, including compensation levels and benefits that are provided for workers in the energy industry;
2. Consider the current workforce demands of the State's energy industry and how best to meet the needs of energy consumers, including the number and types of jobs needed to achieve the State's energy policy and goals;
3. Consider the current compensation levels, including benefits associated with the types of jobs needed to meet the State's energy policy and goals;
4. Review any current efforts to ensure individuals employed in the State's energy industry experience a just and equitable transition to existing and potential future jobs in the energy industry, including efforts to mitigate potential losses in compensation and
benefits, establish a crosswalk of transferable skills and certifications and address new or supplemental training needs;

5. Consider the economic benefits of a well-compensated workforce in the State as it pertains to careers that help the State meet its energy policies and goals; and

6. Examine how a coordinated and holistic statewide effort to ensure a just and equitable transition for individuals employed in the State's energy industry could benefit from the establishment of a state agency, such as an Office of Just and Equitable Transition, dedicated to that purpose and how such an agency could also help meet the needs of employers in the energy industry.

Sec. C-6. Staff assistance. Resolved: That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, the Legislative Council shall provide necessary staffing services to the commission, except that Legislative Council staff support is not authorized when the Legislature is in regular or special session.

Sec. C-7. Report. Resolved: That, notwithstanding Joint Rule 353, no later than December 4, 2024, the commission shall submit a report to the joint standing committees of the Legislature having jurisdiction over energy matters and labor matters that includes the commission's findings and recommendations. The report may include a review of current and future needs of the State's energy industry and its workforce, including needs related to compensation, transferable skills and training. The report may also include recommendations for the structure and functions of a state agency dedicated to ensuring a just and equitable transition for the State's workforce and meeting the needs of businesses in the energy industry that employ them. The joint standing committees may each report out a bill to the 132nd Legislature in 2025 related to the report.'

Amend the bill by relettering or renumbering any nonconsecutive Part letter or section number to read consecutively.

This amendment replaces the bill with a resolve. The amendment does the following.

1. Part A directs the Public Utilities Commission to conduct an inquiry that includes an evaluation of investment planning undertaken by gas utilities and consideration of a framework for commission oversight of future investments made by gas utilities. By December 1, 2025, the commission must submit a report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over utility matters that includes an overview of the inquiry, a summary of any actions the commission plans to take as well as any recommendations for legislation. The committee may report out a bill related to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.

2. Part B requires the Governor's Energy Office in consultation with the Public Utilities Commission, to review and evaluate various issues related to the natural gas industry in the State. By December 1, 2025, the Governor's Energy Office must submit a report to the joint standing committee of the Legislature having jurisdiction over utility matters that includes an overview of the evaluation and any recommendations for legislation. The committee may report out a bill related to the report to the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature.
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3. Part C establishes the Commission to Study the Establishment of a Just and Equitable Transition for Maine's Workforce Impacted by State Energy Policies and Goals. The commission's duties include reviewing and evaluating the State's current energy workforce including compensation levels and benefits that are provided for workers in the energy industry; considering the current workforce demands of the State's energy industry and how best to meet the needs of energy consumers, including the number and types of jobs needed to achieve the State's energy policy and goals; considering the current compensation levels including benefits associated with the types of jobs needed to meet the State's energy policy and goals; reviewing any current efforts to ensure individuals employed in the State's energy industry experience a just and equitable transition to existing and potential future jobs in the energy industry; considering the economic benefits of a well-compensated workforce in the State as it pertains to careers that help the State meet its energy policies and goals; and examining how a coordinated and holistic statewide effort to ensure a just and equitable transition for individuals employed in the State's energy industry could benefit from the establishment of a state agency dedicated to that purpose and how such an agency could also help meet the needs of employers in the energy industry. No later than December 4, 2024, the commission must submit a report to the joint standing committees on energy matters and labor matters that includes its findings and recommendations. The joint standing committees may each report out a bill to the 132nd Legislature in 2025 related to the report.

FISCAL NOTE REQUIRED

(See attached)