

**Maine Governor’s Energy Office/Maine Department of Energy Resources**  
**Request for Information**  
**Regarding Thermal Energy Networks Pursuant to Resolves 2025, ch. 67**

**Issue Date:** September 18, 2025  
**Subject:** Request for Information Regarding Thermal Energy Networks Pursuant to Resolves 2025, ch. 67 (LD 1619)  
**Response Due Date:** October 17, 2025  
**Submit Responses To:** [doer@maine.gov](mailto:doer@maine.gov) with the email subject line “Thermal Energy Network RFI”

**Description**

This is a Request for Information (RFI) issued by the Governor’s Energy Office (GEO)/Maine Department of Energy Resources (DOER).

The purpose of this RFI is to solicit information regarding the potential creation of a “thermal energy networks program” for Maine, pursuant to Resolves 2025, chapter 67, *Resolve, to Direct the Governor’s Energy Office to Solicit Information Regarding the Creation of a Thermal Energy Networks Program in Maine* (LD 1619 or the Resolve),<sup>1</sup> which was signed into law by Governor Janet Mills on June 11, 2025.

Section 1 of the Resolve directs the GEO to solicit information regarding the creation of a thermal energy networks program in Maine, including, but not limited to, relevant frameworks and pilots, information about costs, feasibility and applicability, recommended processes, life-cycle analyses, electric grid impacts, relevance to Maine’s statutory emissions reductions goals, labor considerations, and impact on affordability of housing development and energy. For the purposes of this RFI, “thermal energy network” is defined per the Resolve as *‘a system of interconnected piping that circulates thermal transfer water for the purpose of providing low-emissions heating and cooling to 2 or more buildings through the use of water source heat pumps at each building connected to the system.’* Per the Resolve, the primary thermal energy source for such a network may include, but is not limited to, geothermal resources or recovered thermal energy, such as waste heat captured from buildings or wastewater systems.<sup>2</sup>

Section 2 of this Resolve directs the GEO to prepare, in consultation with the Efficiency Maine Trust (EMT) and the Office of the Public Advocate (OPA), a summary report regarding the information received in response to the RFI and, by January 15, 2026, to submit the report to the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology. GEO may develop and include in the report recommendations regarding the development of a thermal energy networks program in the State.

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<sup>1</sup> Resolves 2025, Chapter 67 (June 11, 2025).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## Intent of this Request for Information

All interested parties are invited to respond to this RFI.

Respondents may respond to some or all of the following information requests and may provide additional information they believe to be useful to GEO/DOER in meeting its obligations under the Resolve, regarding the development of a thermal energy networks program in the State.

GEO/DOER requests written public comments on the following topics as called for by the Resolve. Responses must be in the form of written comments and submitted electronically to [doer@maine.gov](mailto:doer@maine.gov) on or before October 17, 2025, by 4:00 p.m.

- 1) Any relevant available research, framework, pilot projects, system configurations and other information on the total cost, cost savings and efficiencies realized in thermal energy networks across the country;
- 2) The feasibility and applicability of thermal energy networks for residential, commercial and industrial sectors in the State, which may include information related to:
  - a) Geophysical considerations;
  - b) Compatibility with incumbent air source heat pumps and other heating, ventilating and air-conditioning systems, in particular describing the process of retrofitting existing buildings onto a thermal energy network;
  - c) Permitting and right-of-way considerations;
  - d) Constraints around geographic density; and
  - e) Other considerations that demonstrate the total building heating and cooling load potential of thermal energy networks;
- 3) Considerations for facilitating potential thermal energy network pilot projects, including costs, ownership structures, utility customer data needs, rate designs, and cost recovery mechanisms;
- 4) Life-cycle costs and benefits of commercially available or emerging thermal energy network technologies, including comparisons to incumbent heating and cooling technologies appropriate for the Maine climate;
- 5) Potential electric grid impacts, such as smoothing winter and summer peaks and lowering system costs by avoiding or deferring investments in additional electrical generation, transmission and distribution infrastructure;
- 6) The suitability of thermal energy network technology for helping to meet the State's statutory emissions reduction goals<sup>3</sup>;

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<sup>3</sup> 38 MRSA §576-A

- 7) Labor and workforce needs associated with developing thermal energy networks in the State, including consideration of job quality, supplying a skilled and ready workforce, licensing and registered apprenticeship and certified pre-apprenticeship programs, and other considerations;
- 8) Funding opportunities and cost recovery mechanisms, including, but not limited to:
  - a) Leveraging applicable tax credits and other federal assistance;
  - b) Funding from the New England Heat Pump Accelerator;
  - c) The Thermal Energy Investment Program established in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 35-A, section 10128; and
  - d) Rebates for heat pumps through the Efficiency Maine Trust;
- 9) The role thermal energy networks can play in increasing the affordability of housing, development and energy;
- 10) Additional considerations including:
  - a) Technology alternatives or companion solutions (e.g., solar, storage, distributed energy resources, etc.) to thermal energy networks;
  - b) Lifetime and annual project cost-effectiveness, including assumptions, of thermal energy networks;
  - c) Explain the applicability, benefits, challenges and scalability of thermal energy networks to various geographic regions in Maine (e.g., urban, rural, remote, etc.);
  - d) Outline any considerations for new construction or retrofit projects adopting networked geothermal;
  - e) The safety, reliability, and resiliency of thermal energy networks during both normal operations and during outages or extreme weather;
  - f) Utility ownership, regulatory and cost allocation/recovery frameworks that may be applicable to thermal energy networks, including frameworks that currently exist in Maine law; and
- 11) Any additional information relevant to the scope of this RFI.

### **Use of Information**

Information collected from this RFI will be used by the GEO/DOER to inform the fulfillment of requirements under the Resolve, and will be provided to the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology in a summary report.

This is an RFI only, and the GEO/DOER will not pay for information provided under this RFI and no project will be supported as a result of this RFI. This RFI is not accepting applications for financial assistance or financial

incentives. ***The GEO/DOER may publish responses to this RFI on its website. All responses to this RFI may be subject to the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act,<sup>4</sup> thus sensitive or confidential business information should not be provided in response to this RFI.***

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.mainelegislature.org/legis/statutes/1/title1ch13sec0.html>.