

May 2, 2022

To the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology (EUT)

RE: LD 1775 An Act to Establish a Clean Hydrogen Pilot Program

Dear EUT Committee:

The purpose of this letter is to provide testimony in support of LD1775, An Act to Establish a Clean Hydrogen Pilot Program under consideration by the EUT committee on May 2nd in public hearing. I am unfortunately unable to attend this public hearing because I am currently speaking on a panel discussing energy infrastructure constraints in New England.

I am the principal of Newline Energy – a consulting and development Company. I grew up in Portland, ME and reside in Kennebunk, ME. My career after six (6) years of military service has been dedicated to the Energy Industry. I started Newline Energy to provide development services to utilities, industrial, and energy consumers in Maine and New England – with a focus on natural gas infrastructure and Energy Transition projects to include hydrogen and renewable natural gas.

The Clean Hydrogen Pilot Program provides key benefits in the following areas:

Diversity of Local and Reliable Energy Supply: Maine and New England are at an energy crossroads – a transition point from legacy resources to future applications of new resources. During this transition, we must maintain affordability and reliability. It will be critically important to continue to invest in and maintain our existing energy infrastructure while simultaneously investing in innovation for renewable and low carbon energy solutions. We would be wise to do both.

There has been important growth and integration of Variable Renewable Energy (VRE) solutions such as wind and solar. However, these VRE resources are intermittent and will require further end use applications (such as hydrogen production) to maximize the benefits of these resources. The Clean Hydrogen Pilot Program will create opportunities to optimize Maine’s renewable resources and provide diverse, local, and reliable energy supply solutions within the State.

Innovation and Cost Competitive Solutions: Hydrogen is emerging as an important component of the Energy Transition. I am currently involved in several hydrogen applications, but there is general agreement that wide scale use of Hydrogen as a decarbonization pathway will require further innovation, scalability, and reduction in cost.


As an active industry participant, I would be interested in supporting this pilot program to assemble industry experts, deploy innovative solutions, and identify opportunities to drive down cost, increase reliability and generate diversity of our energy supply chain.

There is an appetite for Hydrogen, but we will need to solve various challenges – and a pilot program is an important first step.

I find it important to restate that I am both a natural gas advocate AND a renewable energy advocate. The key will be pioneering solutions that optimize our existing energy infrastructure while investing in innovative solutions to maintain a diverse, local, and reliable energy supply chain. We can do both.

Based on my experience providing consulting and development services to the energy industry in Maine and New England, I support the Clean Hydrogen Pilot Program. Thank you for considering these comments in support of this decision.

Sincerely,
Jeff Tounge



By: _____
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