



# Maine Conservation Voters

*Inform. Vote. Protect.*

## **Testimony in Opposition to LD 444, An Act to Lower Energy Costs by Repealing the Law Setting Out the State's Goals for Consumption of Electricity from Renewable Resources**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Lucy Hochschartner, and I am the Climate and Clean Energy Director with Maine Conservation Voters (MCV). MCV represents over 14,000 members and supporters who are building a just, thriving future for all by acting on the climate crisis, protecting the environment, and safeguarding our democracy. I am here today to testify in opposition to LD 444, An Act to Lower Energy Costs by Repealing the Law Setting Out the State's Goals for Consumption of Electricity from Renewable Resources.

I'm sure you have all been hearing stories from constituents about the need for change in our electricity system. Perhaps, you're hearing about the increasing impacts of extreme weather on our system. Devastating storms — the kind that keep us at home worrying whether the power will stay on, putting out sandbags for floods, and hoping the wind doesn't take down anything critical — are increasing. According to the Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine 2024 Update, we now have 1–2 additional days per year with 2+ inches of precipitation, and 2–3 more days per year with 1 inch of precipitation. Winter storms are becoming more extreme as well.<sup>1</sup> We have all checked in with loved ones during the past few years to make sure they are holding up ok. Maybe you've had to help with clean up afterward. In 2023, the average CMP customer had a \$10 increase on their bill from just three of these storms. The *only* way that we can avoid these storms and their impacts getting worse is by transitioning to clean electricity as quickly and justly as possible. It is incompatible with a healthy future for our communities.

Perhaps you have been hearing about the need to lower electricity prices. This bill is not the solution. Between 2011 and 2022, Maine ratepayers saved an average of \$21.5 million per year due to this policy.<sup>2</sup> Those savings come largely from reducing the costs Maine families and

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<sup>1</sup> MCC STS. 2024. Scientific Assessment of Climate Change and Its Effects in Maine - 2024 Update. A Report by the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STS) of the Maine Climate Council (MCC). Augusta, Maine. 268 pp.

[https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/STS\\_2024\\_digital.pdf](https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/STS_2024_digital.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Sustainable Energy Advantage for Governor's Energy Office. 2024. An Assessment of Maine's Renewable Portfolio Standard.

<https://www.maine.gov/energy/sites/maine.gov.energy/files/inline-files/Maine-RPS-Impacts-and-Procurement-Policy-Options-Report-Master-FINAL.pdf>

businesses must pay for electricity from the wholesale market. This market has been extremely volatile in recent years largely due to our reliance on natural gas.<sup>3</sup> As a state without fossil fuel resources, the only way that our state can become more self-reliant, have more predictable pricing, and keep money in our own communities is by transitioning to Maine-made renewables like onshore wind, offshore wind, and solar.

While it is not the entire solution, clean electricity is a critical part of *any* affordability solution. Fossil fuels are costing us. In 2021, Maine spent more than \$4.7 billion on imported fossil fuels. To keep that money in customers' pockets and in our own local economies, we need to electrify and transition to clean forms of electricity generation. Laws like this one have been critical tools in our suite of affordability options, because let me clearly state — we will never achieve the goal of making power affordable for all if we do not make it renewable.

There are many additional steps that could be taken on affordability. MCV is fighting every day to reach 100% electricity access, just as we do to reach 100% clean electricity, because we know that Maine families are in crisis. We could take the lead of utilities like LA Water and Power, which ended disconnections for those with financial hardship<sup>4</sup>, France's utility EDF, which provides a small, lifeline amount of electricity to customers<sup>5</sup>, expand our efficiency and weatherization programming, continue to build out clean electricity generation that allows us to get off volatile and expensive fossil fuels, lean into beneficial electrification, or address the almost \$210 million in profit CMP and Versant brought in during 2023.<sup>6</sup>

I wholeheartedly agree that we need to make electricity more affordable, but this is not the way. I urge you to vote no on LD 444, thank you. The people of Maine are counting on you.

Sincerely,  
Lucy Hochschartner

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<sup>3</sup> Governor's Energy Office. "Electricity Prices."

<https://www.maine.gov/energy/electricity-prices#:~:text=About%20half%20of%20all%20electricity,power%20generation%20and%20transmission%20system>.

<sup>4</sup> Smith, Hayley. November 16, 2022. "Los Angeles DWP to end water and power shutoffs for low-income customers who can't pay."  
<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-11-16/l-a-to-end-water-and-power-shutoffs-for-low-income-customers-who-cant-pay>

<sup>5</sup> EDF. November 12, 2021. "EDF will no longer request that electricity be cut off to its residential customers."

<https://www.edf.fr/en/the-edf-group/dedicated-sections/journalists/all-press-releases/edf-will-no-longer-request-that-electricity-be-cut-off-to-its-residential-customers>

<sup>6</sup> CMP and Versant FERC Form 1 from 2023, net-income line item.