

**Testimony of Ashley Luszczki**  
**Before the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology**  
**In Support of L.D. 601, An Act to Remove State-imposed Referendum Requirements**  
**Regarding Nuclear Power**  
**March 13, 2025**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Ashley Luszczki. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on L.D. 601, An Act to Remove State-imposed Referendum Requirements Regarding Nuclear Power. On behalf of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, representing small to large businesses across the state, I am testifying in support of this legislation.

Maine's experience with nuclear energy dates back to the operation of the Maine Yankee Nuclear Power Plant in Wiscasset, which was operational from 1972 – 1996. Following the incident at Three Mile Island in 1979 came opposition and concern for nuclear in Maine. A ballot question on September 23, 1980, asked voters if “An Act to Prohibit the Generation of Electric Power by Means of Nuclear Fission should become law.” The question failed with 59 percent of voters against it. In 1982, another question was presented to voters asking if they wanted to end the use of nuclear power for producing electricity in five years; that referendum was also faced with opposition. However, shortly after – perhaps in response to these concerns - the 111<sup>th</sup> Legislature enacted PL1983, c. 540 requiring the approval of Mainers via referendum before the construction of any nuclear power plant.

As you're aware, the Chamber supports policies that help to advance a positive business climate and secure a strong state economy in which Maine businesses can compete and succeed. Should Maine move forward in exploring nuclear in the future to meet increased energy demands and decide it would be a valuable addition to Maine's generation mix, the current referendum requirement could pose a challenge for investment. The uncertainty of a statewide vote injects risk for potential investors and developers.

We believe that by lifting this requirement, there may be opportunities for a stronger Maine economy through the development of a new energy resource, which could open up the potential for new industries in Maine, educational opportunities, job growth and new sources of revenue.

Thank you for your consideration; we urge you to support L.D. 601.