

Maine Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology – Chair Lawrence & Chair Sachs  
**LD 601 Testimony – FOR**  
March 13, 2025

- Good afternoon and thank you to Chair Lawrence & Chair Sachs, and the Committee for the opportunity to express our support for LD 601. My name is Kati Austgen; I'm a nuclear engineer and Director of Public Engagement & New Nuclear at the Nuclear Energy Institute, or NEI. NEI is the nuclear energy industry's premier trade group, representing 345 members from all facets of industry, universities, research laboratories, and labor unions.
- NEI applauds the bill sponsors for introducing this bill and seeking to remove barriers to providing clean, reliable, affordable nuclear energy in Maine.
- It is important to be able to consider all energy options without unnecessary barriers to their selection and deployment.
- Public support for nuclear energy is bipartisan. In fact, it is one of the few areas of agreement on Capitol Hill and in state legislatures across the country. Gallup polling has tracked public opinion on nuclear energy for over three decades, finding that more than half of Americans support nuclear energy<sup>1</sup> and a survey by the Potential Energy Coalition<sup>2</sup> shows greater than 60% support among U.S. voters across demographics of gender, age, education, and even affiliation with environmental organizations.
- Pew Research Center data<sup>3</sup> also reflects support for nuclear energy holding steady, and growing, over the last decade, as both Democrat and Republican respondents reported increased favorability for nuclear energy.
- NEI also conducts surveys, specifically of our “nuclear neighbors;” those that live in communities hosting nuclear energy facilities (but not employed by to facility owner or in the same household as employees). Nuclear neighbors consistently indicate significant support for nuclear energy – 85% or more in favor.<sup>4</sup>
- The top reasons for public support of nuclear energy vary, but typically include its clean, reliable, affordable, and energy security attributes that also

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<sup>1</sup> <https://news.gallup.com/poll/474650/americans-support-nuclear-energy-highest-decade.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> [https://potentialenergycoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/NewNuclear\\_Report\\_May2023.pdf](https://potentialenergycoalition.org/wp-content/uploads/NewNuclear_Report_May2023.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/08/05/majority-of-americans-support-more-nuclear-power-in-the-country/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.bisconti.com/blog/9th-national-survey-of-nuclear-power-plant-neighbors>

come with high quality jobs and the associated direct & indirect economic support for communities.

- Thank you and I would be happy to share more about public support for nuclear energy at the Committee's discretion.

Additional Resources:

- [NEI's Compendium of State Legislation and Regulations Supporting Nuclear](#)
- [U.S. Nuclear Plants](#) and Nuclear State Factsheets
- [Advanced Nuclear 101](#)