

Testimony of Crystal Burke in Support of
LD 633: An Act Concerning the Restoration of Electricity During Emergencies for Certain Medically Vulnerable Individuals Who Rely on Electronic Medical Apparatuses

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and honorable members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee. I am Crystal Burke, and I am a resident and school board member of Hancock, Maine. Thank you for providing me with this opportunity to support **LD 633: An Act Concerning the Restoration of Electricity During Emergencies for Certain Medically Vulnerable Individuals Who Rely on Electronic Medical Apparatuses**.

Two Christmases ago, we lost power for about a week. We had a tree come down in our driveway and take out the line to our house, so not only did we lose power along with our neighbors. Our neighbors had their landlord bring them a generator. On the third night, when they got power back and we couldn't keep the house over fifty degrees, they let us borrow it for the night before returning it to their landlord. We spent three more days with no power in cold weather, trapped in our own home since we couldn't get a car through the tree in our driveway.

This situation is a bad enough and familiar enough one for many Mainers. However, what is unique is that we have a child with Down Syndrome who uses a CPAP at night to keep her breathing and to prevent brain damage or death from hypoxia. When we don't have power, I don't get to sleep because I must stay awake enough to hear when she stops breathing well, or stops breathing at all and rouse her enough to get her breathing again. Sleep is important for every human being. Sleep is important for growing kids. Sleep is important to my employer so they can have a functioning employee. The torture of knowing that you have a choice between sleep and possibly waking up to having lost your child is a feeling I hope nobody in this committee ever knows, but one that I also hope they see the value in preventing any parent or family or individual from having to experience. Having our power restoration prioritized as one of the first would be amazing. Knowing neighbors who use oxygen or other equally or more necessary medical devices also be prioritized would be a comfort, and the correct thing to do.

Supporters of this legislation have talked about Hurricane Ida to demonstrate the importance of a bill that directs electrical utilities to create plans for the restoration of electricity to those who have a documented need for electrically-powered medical equipment. However, these concerns exist here in Maine too. With increasingly severe storms, and increasingly long power outages and response times, access to electricity can be the difference between life and death. I hope this honorable committee sees that and encourages the passage of **LD 633: An Act Concerning the Restoration of Electricity During Emergencies for Certain Medically Vulnerable Individuals Who Rely on Electronic Medical Apparatuses**.