

April 8, 2025

Honorable Mark Lawrence, Senate Chair
Honorable Melanie Sachs, House Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Letter of Support from Kenneth A. Colburn for LD 1270, An Act to Establish the Department of Energy Resources

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and Members of the Committee:

I write to express my strong support for the actions proposed in the above-referenced legislation.

By way of background, before retiring in 2020, I spent 30 years as an energy and environmental professional, advising regulators, policy makers, and advocates across the United States and internationally including working as a state regulator myself. For the last five years, I have served as the co-chair of the Energy Working Group of the Maine Climate Council. In addition, I've been a trustee of the Efficiency Maine Trust for the last four years.

As you recognize, we are in the midst of an unparalleled transformation of the energy sector due to technological disruption. This change echoes the decentralization of telephony – which morphed from land lines to smart phones – and computing, which transitioned from centralized data processing departments to individual web-enabled laptops.

Solar and wind have become the cheapest power sources, but they are intermittent and thus require backup until energy storage achieves cost parity. In the last century, we overbuilt expensive electricity supply resources on the grid to meet infrequent peak use periods. In the next century we will manage electricity demand instead, balancing it with available, low-cost, renewable generation plus storage. Beneficial electrification will be

crucial in providing the necessary flexibility. The more effectively we electrify energy end-uses like transportation and heating, the smoother and more cost-effective the energy transition will be for Maine ratepayers.

Energy is the driver of our economy and our society. Comprehensive transformation in the energy sector therefore warrants similarly substantive modification in how state energy policy is addressed. This is particularly true with respect to how Maine plans, manages, and ensures that all its people and businesses have access to safe, reliable, affordable, and clean energy.

LD 1270's proposal to establish the Maine Department of Energy Resources is commensurate with the magnitude of these growing responsibilities. Establishing a cabinet-level energy presence will also provide greater stability, policy alignment, and accountability than a gubernatorial office. The result should be a more stable environment in which to grow Maine's businesses, workforce, climate and efficiency efforts, staff expertise and retention, and overall effectiveness.

Safe, reliable, affordable, and clean energy is fundamental to Mainers' quality of life. State policy treatment of this cornerstone warrants elevation to the cabinet level, so I wholeheartedly endorse the proposal reflected in LD 1270.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments. If you have any questions or require further information, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Best regards,



Kenneth A. Colburn
Principal

cc: Ms. Linda LaCroix, EUT Committee Clerk