



Testimony in Opposition to LD 1270:

“An Act to Establish the Department of Energy Resources”

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and the distinguished members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Harris Van Pate, and I serve as policy analyst for Maine Policy Institute. Maine Policy is a free-market think tank, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that advocates for individual liberty and economic freedom in Maine. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to LD 1270, “An Act to Establish the Department of Energy Resources.”

This bill proposes a fundamental and unnecessary expansion of state government by creating a new cabinet-level Department of Energy Resources, transferring authority from the existing Governor’s Energy Office. In doing so, it seeks to concentrate even more power within Augusta’s bureaucracy, enabling sweeping regulatory influence over Maine’s energy markets under the guise of climate planning and centralized coordination.

At a time when many Mainers are struggling with some of the highest energy costs in the nation, the last thing our state needs is more red tape, more government staff, and more top-down mandates driving up electricity rates and distorting market signals. LD 1270 enshrines the costly and speculative priorities of the state's climate action agenda while diverting resources from practical solutions that could provide real relief for Maine families and businesses.

The bill directs the new department to align all state energy policies with greenhouse gas reduction goals, effectively subordinating affordability, reliability, and market competition to climate planning. Government planners—not consumers or producers—will dictate Maine’s energy trajectory under this configuration.

The newly created department would also substantially overlap with preexisting departments, specifically the Department of Environmental Protection. The DEP already considers a significant number of major energy policies, from the Advanced Clean Cars II and Clean Trucks II Programs,¹ established the Climate Action Plan, a major long-term energy resource transition plan,² and advancing energy storage initiatives throughout Maine.³

Additionally, LD 1270 grants broad new powers to a politically appointed commissioner, including oversight of competitive solicitations, direction of renewable energy strategies,

¹ <https://www.maine.gov/dep//bep/legislative-reports/2024%20BEP%20Legislative%20Report.pdf>

² https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/2024-01/PCAP-Template-MAINE%20-%201_9_24.pdf

³ <https://www.maine.gov/energy/initiatives/renewable-energy/energy-storage>



and representation in regional greenhouse gas negotiations. This structure places immense authority in unelected hands, removing key decisions from legislative oversight and public accountability.

We urge the committee to reject LD 1270 and pursue an energy policy rooted in competition, consumer choice, and technological neutrality. Let's foster a decentralized energy economy that rewards innovation and resilience, not bureaucratic control. Thank you for your time and consideration.