



Testimony of Island Institute in Support of LD 1270, An Act to Establish the Department of Energy Resources

April 8, 2025

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and Members of the Committee, my name is Nick Battista, and I am testifying in support of LD 1270 on behalf of Island Institute. We are a nonprofit organization in Rockland with a mission to boldly navigate climate and economic change with island and coastal communities to expand opportunities and deliver solutions.

Island Institute supports island, coastal, and remote communities in their journey towards resiliency, clean energy deployment, energy reliability and affordability, and economic sustainability. Since 2019, Island Institute has been the Northeast regional partner for the US Department of Energy's Energy Technology Innovation Partnership Program (ETIPP). ETIPP pairs communities with experts from the national labs to dive deeply into an energy planning related issues. Through the ETIPP program alone, Island Institute has empowered communities in leveraging over \$850,000 in additional federal funding as well as thousands of hours of world class technical assistance from the National Renewable Energy Lab and other national labs.

This work complements the efforts of the Governor's Energy Office (GEO), and in a growing number of instances, GEO staff have been an important partner in this work. We are grateful for the instances where staff capacity and support at the State level have helped to keep projects coming out of ETIPP moving forward as they seek implementation funding.

Establishing the Department of Energy Resources will also support the ability to retain highly qualified professional staff who are dedicated to public service. The cultivation of institutional knowledge and capacity is invaluable to the work of state government to provide affordable and reliable energy for all Maine people and businesses, particularly given the complexity of energy planning and policy. Agency staff with substantial experience, technical expertise, and the ability to cultivate more durable relationships within state government and with local government leaders, utility companies, and other critical outside stakeholders will inform durable policies and programs.

This work becomes more urgent and important in the face of the growing impacts to our electrical system and grid infrastructure due to recent storms. With some of the most frequent power outages in the country and challenges associated with rebuilding more resilient communities, our state needs a longer term, coordinated focus on our energy infrastructure. I urge the Committee to support LD 1270. Your thoughtful consideration is appreciated