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Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology
RE: LD 1270—An Act to Establish the Department of Energy Resources

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology, my name is Karen Blakelock, climate and energy policy advisor for the Nature Conservancy in Maine. **I appreciate this opportunity to submit written comments in support of LD 1270.**

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that both nature and people can thrive. We work in more than 70 countries, and we use a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners.

The Governor's Energy Office (GEO) is an invaluable resource for the people of Maine. This office remains committed to reaching the renewable energy targets of the state in a way that prioritizes affordable and reliable energy for all Maine people and businesses. Their efforts in planning and managing the clean energy transition for all of us in Maine is invaluable and we're lucky to have such thoughtful and hardworking employees in state government. A cabinet-level department outside of the governor's office will allow this important work to continue beyond the next election cycle and will make it easier for the state to retain professional staff with the necessary expertise long-term.

A recent poll conducted by TNC¹ indicates that most Mainers are worried about the high cost of electricity. 71% of Maine voters shared that they feel the cost of electricity to be an extremely serious or very serious concern. Energy is a key part of our everyday lives, and decisions made by GEO impact all of us daily. Elevating the Governor's Energy Office to a Cabinet level department is a reasonable step at a time when our aging energy infrastructure and necessary transition to a low-carbon economy are priorities for the state.

The Nature Conservancy understands the need to rapidly build well-sited renewable energy to meet our state emission reduction goals, and we expect Maine to do it in a way that considers both human communities and the impact on the natural environment. GEO currently coordinates across government and "works in partnership with various state agencies, federal and local

¹ **Methodology:** From February 21-25, 2025, the bipartisan research team of New Bridge Strategy and FM3 Research completed 515 interviews among registered voters throughout Maine. Interviews were conducted online as well as on landlines and cell phones. The margin of error for the full sample is +/-4.32 percent; margins of sampling error for subgroups within the sample will be larger. Some percentages may sum to more than 100 percent due to rounding.

officials, industry, nonprofit interests, and academia on energy issues.”² If GEO is elevated to a cabinet level position, we can expect that their work will continue to be in partnership with the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Maine Office of Community Affairs (MOCA) to ensure a just and equitable transition to a clean energy future that benefits both the people and nature of Maine.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in **support of LD 1270**.

² <https://www.maine.gov/energy/about>