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Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology

RE: LD 1700—An Act to Create a Direct Investment Pilot Project Under the Maine Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology, my name is Karen Blakelock and I work as the climate and energy policy advisor for the Nature Conservancy in Maine. I appreciate this opportunity to submit written comments **in support of LD 1700**.

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 use a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners.

TNC supports LD 1700 as it creates a renewable energy generation and grid technology pilot project through the Maine Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator to support projects focused on renewable energy generation, grid technology such as storage that supports clean energy distribution, microgrids, and smart grid applications.

The pathways to meeting our emissions reduction targets in Maine are well documented through various modeling exercises done by the Climate Council¹ and the Governor's Energy Office², and we know that investments in smart grid technology, renewable energy, battery storage, and microgrids, as well as other technologies are necessary to achieve these goals. TNC is grateful to Efficiency Maine Trust for their ongoing leadership in this space, and for the bill sponsor for bringing forward this exciting opportunity for Maine to continue to invest in these necessary technologies.

I ask that you **vote Ought to Pass on LD 1700**. I am happy to answer any questions now or in the future.

¹ Maine Climate Council Emissions Study, October 2024,
https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/2024-10/MCC%20Emissions%20Study%20-%20Maine%20Climate%20Council%2010-15-24_0.pdf

² Maine Pathways to 2040: Analysis and Insights, January 2025,
<https://www.maine.gov/energy/sites/maine.gov.energy/files/2025-01/Maine%20Pathways%20to%202040%20Analysis%20and%20Insights.pdf>