



April 26, 2025

Honorable Mark Lawrence, Senate Chair
Honorable Melanie Sachs, House Chair
Joint Legislative Committee on Energy Utilities and Technology
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Re: Testimony in Opposition to LD 1048 An Act to Require Certain Notice Requirements for Whistleblower Protections

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs and Members of the Energy Utilities and Technology:

The Maine Water Utilities Association (MWUA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in **opposition to** LD 1048.

About MWUA. MWUA is a nonprofit association based in Augusta that provides support for water works professionals throughout the State of Maine in advocating for safe drinking water through educational and technical programming as well as advocacy on the local, state, and national level. The Association was formed in 1925 and consists of approximately 86 utility and 60 associate members. Maine's water utilities provide service to approximately 700,000 Maine residents, thousands of Maine businesses and public institutions, and millions of visitors to Maine every year.

Discussion. LD 1048 would require all public utilities, including water utilities, to provide written notices each year, in a manner prescribed by the statute, advising employees of their rights (as detailed in 35-A MRS §1316) to provide testimony and information to legislative committees, the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), as well as the Public Advocate (OPA).

MWUA opposes this legislation for the following reasons. First, this creates an unfunded mandate on local units of government (consumer owned utilities). Ratepayers will need to absorb the cost associated with providing this yearly notice. Second this bill appears to assume that employees of utilities do not know their rights and would testify to the legislature, PUC, and/or the OPA they were aware of their protections under the whistleblower law. We are not aware that this is a problem for employees of water utilities. Lastly, whistleblower protections are not unique to employees of public utilities. It is unclear why this type of notice requirement is targeting public utilities; it is not equitable to put the burden of issuing annual notices only on utilities.

Conclusion. LD 1048 places an unnecessary administrative burden on public utilities that will increase costs to ratepayers. We urge you to oppose LD 1048 and vote Ought Not to Pass.

Thank you for your consideration,

Roger Crouse
Chair, MWUA Legislative & Regulatory Affairs Committee

Cc: James I. Cohen, Verrill Dana, LLP, Legislative Counsel



