

Maine Climate Action **NOW!**

To: Maine Legislature Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology
From: Ezra Sassaman, Advocacy Coordinator, Maine Climate Action Now
Date: May 15, 2025
Re: LD 1949, An Act Regarding Energy Fairness (SUPPORT)

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology, my name is Ezra Sassaman. I live in Bar Harbor and represent Maine Climate Action Now! (MCAN), a coalition of sixteen nonprofit organizations united by a shared desire for transformative action in response to the climate crisis.

Across the state, many, especially low-income people, are struggling with rising electricity costs and a high energy burden.¹ At the same time, investor-owned utilities have been enjoying consistent profits. On top of this divide, utilities and their parent companies have even passed on costs to customers that are unrelated to their core function. A 2024 report found that:

“... the nation’s most prominent investor-owned utilities have routinely tried to charge customers — and often succeeded — for problematic expenses ranging from staff lobbying and slick corporate advertising, to private jet flights and spa services.”²

We are supportive of the fact that Maine has begun cracking down on this behavior³ and support LD 1949 because it will add additional consumer protections against utilities that may mismanage the money they have received from ratepayers.

We also support the other components of this legislation. To better ensure everyone in the state has access to the electricity they need, we need to increase data transparency to better grasp the magnitude of problems facing ratepayers – like overdue accounts, disconnections, and payment plans. We also need to crack down on misleading, predatory competitive electricity provider contracts and expand disconnection protections for the most vulnerable among us.

For the above-stated reasons, we urge you to vote “ought-to-pass” on LD 1949. Thank you.

¹ VEIC and Beech Hill Research. [“Quantifying Maine’s Household Energy Burden and Affordability Gap”](#). Report. December 1, 2024. Accessed May 12, 2025.

² Karlee Weinman and Itai Vardi. [“Report: Utilities charge customers for lobbying, corporate branding, and luxury lifestyle expenses”](#). *Energy and Policy Institute*. December 11, 2024. Accessed May 12, 2025.

³ Steven Singer. [“Maine approves rules to restrict utilities’ lobbying, prevent costs from being passed to customers”](#). *Central Maine*. February 4, 2025. Accessed May 12, 2025.