

Jeanette MacNeille
2 Brookside Drive
Topsham, ME 04086

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Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Jeanette MacNeille, I live in Topsham. Thank you for the chance to testify in support of the sponsor's amendment to L.D. 1963.

As amended, L.D. 1963 will create a whistleblower process to protect people who identify financial imprudence, fraud and safety violations related to public utilities here in Maine.

Where there is money fraud often follows. Famous incidents of fraud in energy and utility companies include the Enron debacle (2001, financial fraud), WorldCom (2002, accounting fraud in the long distance phone company), and in the BP Deepwater Horizon disaster, in which safety violations were uncovered related to clean-up efforts. These incidents and many others were brought to light by whistleblowers. In most cases a whistleblower is fired after reporting a problem, and often they are blackballed in the industry in which they have developed their careers.

But whistleblowing benefits the public by uncovering rate irregularities, safety, and environmental issues: We want serious problems to come to light. This law provides a process for evaluating whistleblower claims, and helps protect the public. As the federal government dismantles its anti-fraud and consumer protection programs there could be no better time to develop a program like this in Maine.

I strongly urge your support for LD 1963. Thank you for your consideration.