

Dear chairperson Lawrence, Representative Sachs and distinguished members of joint committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology I'll be speaking in support for LD 1963 An Act To Protect and Compensate Public Utility Whistleblowers  
My Name, Clifford Krolick, Town of Parsonsfield, Maine.

A Whistleblower Protection act, besides being one of the first of its' kind in the nation to call out utility cheating, will go far to offer legal protections and compensation for whistleblowers. This will remove initial levels of fear that could prevent an individual from taking actions. Without this support individuals are risking a great deal by standing alone against the power and money that utilities can muster.

Existing legal protections are a joke and they almost discourage potential whistleblowers from taking actions. Here is why existing whistleblower protection is inadequate Title 35-A, Section 1316, whistleblowers are required internally to report first. If they do not, retribution is legal. Yet if they do, they may be immediately and preemptively fired. Maine is also an "at-will" state, meaning employees may be fired without explanation. This requirement is common in other states also.

Since our investor owned utilities are monopolies there is little time and or effort to oversee all the utilities financial actions. Diligent oversight remains a huge challenge. There is no question that whistleblowers serve an important function. Historically, the stories of Karen Silkwood and Erin Brokovich stand out, and more recent Lindsey Gulden and Tyler Ferhman. A Maine public advocate and legislator also recently received calls from would-be whistleblowers, but could not help the callers under current law.

In the face of ever- increasing disgust and dislike of our current utilities, Mainers have taken notice that our two investor owned utilities have had the lowest rank in customer satisfaction than most of the other utilities within the United States.

YES! A strong Compensation and legal protection law to encourage whistleblowers will go far to help keep these monopolies in line and making it ever more difficult for them to cheat.