



Advancing the Clean Energy Future

PO Box 583 • Rockport, ME 04856-0583
207-236-6470 • acadiacenter.org

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Acadia Center testimony in favor of L.D. 1949, “An Act Regarding Energy Fairness.”

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and distinguished members of the ENR Committee,

My name is Peter LaFond, and I am the Senior Advocate and Maine Program Director for Acadia Center, a New England - based green energy nonprofit with offices in Rockport, Maine. Acadia Center advocates for bold and innovative solutions that will provide a bright and enduring energy future for all Mainers.

I’m sure that the Committee is aware that many Mainers are struggling to pay their electricity bills. These Mainers must make wrenching decisions about how they can pay these bills, deferring other fundamental necessities. L.D. 1949 provides some hope for struggling Mainers, and can help give them access to clean, affordable energy. The bill accomplishes this in several ways: by protecting vulnerable Mainers from disconnections, by requiring improved transparency from utilities, by protecting Mainers from predatory competitive electricity providers, and by defining environmental justice populations, among other protections.

Importantly, L.D. 1949 is critical to bringing Maine communities that struggle under the high energy burdens in Maine, and the bill will encourage the PUC to recognize and integrate these communities into its decision-making process. Acadia Center has previously strongly supported Maine environmental justice bills (two of which were voted ought-to-pass) before this Committee and filed comments in the PUC to prioritize greater participation by environmental justice populations. See Intervenor Funding, Dkt. No. 2022-00299. Acadia Center has also supported establishing environmental justice definitions in other states, including passing legislation in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Indeed, six other states in the Northeast have adopted specific definitions of environmental justice populations: CT, MA, NJ, NY, RI, and Vermont.

Working primarily with the Conservation Law Foundation, the Union of Concerned Scientists, and the bill’s sponsor Senator Anne Carney, Acadia Center has advocated for a comprehensive definition of environmental justice population in L.D. 1949 to cover an estimated 52% of Maine’s population. Please vote “ought to pass” on L.D. 1949.

Thank you for considering Acadia Center’s testimony and I am available to respond to any inquiries the Committee may have.

Peter LaFond, Senior Advocate and Maine Program Director at Acadia Center

plafond@acadiacenter.org

207-329-4606