

# Testimony to the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee in support of the Proposed Sponsor Amendment to LD1963

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My name is Ed Geis, I live in Camden, and **I support the Proposed Sponsor Amendment to LD1963.**

By providing additional legal protections to potential whistleblowers in the Public Utility sector, the Proposed Sponsor Amendment to **LD1963 would significantly help regulators protect ratepayers from public utility malfeasance.**

In Maine currently public utility whistleblowers are vulnerable to retaliation—for example, by statute they're required to report issues internally to their employer before reporting an issue to regulators, which could lead the employer to fire them immediately.

In addition to losing their job, whistleblowers may find themselves blackballed from their industry, potentially derailing their career and long-term financial security. These risks make it extremely risky for employees to report illegal or unethical behavior they observe at work.

The Proposed Sponsor Amendment would address this problem by offering whistleblowers more protection and potential financial compensation.

Whistleblowers have proven invaluable in uncovering bad behavior by public utilities. In Ohio, for example, a whistleblower was instrumental in holding people accountable for the infamous First Energy scandal several years ago. There are plenty of other examples.

The LD1963 Sponsor Amendment is modelled on successful programs developed by the U.S. Justice Department and the Security and Exchange Commission. Both of these programs have brought important criminal behavior that would not otherwise have come to light.

While Maine's utility regulators monitor our public utilities behavior as best they can, they can't necessarily see everything that goes on internally. Unethical and/or illegal acts may occur in the shadows. By creating a safer environment for whistleblowers to step forward, you'll be handing the Public

Utility Commission a bright flashlight. This not only makes it easier for regulators to spot bad behavior, it discourages such behavior in the first place by making it harder to “get away with it.”

The EUT Committee should support the Sponsor Amendment to LD1963.