



Testimony Neither For Nor Against LD 1900
An Act to Bring Parity to the State's Recognition of the Wabanaki Nations' Authority to
Provide Electric Power Districts and Child Support Enforcement
May 13, 2025

Senator Carney, Representative Kuhn, and members of the committee, my name is James Cote and I am here on behalf of Versant Power to testify neither for nor against LD 1900.

Versant Power understands and appreciates intent of this bill to bring parity to the Houlton Band of Maliseet and Mi'kmaq Nation's authority to provide electric power, consistent with the authority that other Maine tribes currently possess.

Versant Power is working constructively with the Penobscot, Mi'kmaq and Passamaquoddy Tribes on various projects and issues currently, including:

- Versant Power has participated in a number of conversations with members and representatives of the Penobscot Nation and Mi'kmaq Nation working on energy resilience and planning, touring local facilities and exploring opportunities for partnerships to achieve the Tribes' goals.
- Versant Power also has recently met with Passamaquoddy Tribal members at Pleasant Point and is continuing to share information about energy use and opportunities with interested stakeholders as part of the Department of Energy's Energy Technology Innovation Partnership Project (ETIPP).

No matter how the Committee chooses to proceed with this legislation, Versant Power is committed to developing and strengthening such partnerships in cases where the tribes believe our support and assistance on electricity matters may be valuable.

We would note for the committee that Versant Power does not have insight into the size or location of trust lands and would therefore require additional information to help understand the potential impact of this proposal.

We also note that, when customers located in any geographic area remove themselves from a utility service territory, such a reduction in customers can have cost impacts on remaining utility customers, as the costs associated with building and maintaining the electrical grid are spread across all utility customers. Such impacts would be adjudicated by a proceeding at the Maine Public Utilities Commission, which would also consider questions including the public interest value of the reorganization and the fair value of assets that would be transferred to a new entity.



Should the committee elect to move this legislation forward, Versant Power stands ready to participate in any discussions that the Houlton Band of Maliseet's and Mi'kmaq Nation would find valuable.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this information and would be pleased to answer questions or provide more information for the work session.