

**Testimony of Maine People's Alliance
In Support of LD 1949: An Act Relating to Energy Fairness
May 15, 2025**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology:

My name is Megan Smith, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Maine People's Alliance, an organization made up of more than 32,000 members from every county in Maine committed to advancing economic, racial, and environmental justice in our state. I write today in strong support of LD 1949, An Act Relating to Energy Fairness.

Mainers deserve a fair energy system—one that works as well for regular people as it does for utility executives. LD 1949 is a critical step toward that goal. It offers overdue protections for customers struggling with skyrocketing utility bills and ensures that the transition to a clean energy future is both equitable and affordable.

Right now, too many Mainers are forced to choose between keeping the lights on and putting food on the table. In 2023 alone, over 440,000 disconnection notices were sent out, and low-income households continue to pay more than twice what is considered affordable for electricity. That is unacceptable. LD 1949 directly addresses this crisis by expanding disconnection protections, ensuring no one loses power because they are elderly, have a medical condition, or are caring for a newborn.

The bill also cracks down on predatory practices from competitive electricity providers who have overcharged Mainers by more than \$135 million since 2016. It demands greater transparency from utilities and prevents them from passing unnecessary expenses—like board travel and investor relations—onto ratepayers. These are basic, common-sense protections that align Maine with best practices from states like Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut.

Perhaps most importantly, LD 1949 helps pave the way for a clean, reliable, and affordable energy system. It improves how we connect new renewable energy sources to the grid, strengthens workforce standards by requiring registered apprenticeships, and ensures that environmental justice considerations are finally built into our regulatory framework. If we are serious about addressing climate change, lowering energy bills, and creating a resilient grid that serves everyone, this bill is essential.

At Maine People's Alliance, we believe electricity is not a luxury—it is a necessity. And it is long past time that our energy system reflected that belief. On behalf of our members and communities across the state, we urge you to vote "Ought to Pass" on LD 1949.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to a fairer energy future for all Mainers.

Sincerely,

Megan Smith
Maine People's Alliance