



Conservation
Law Foundation

For a thriving New England

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**Testimony before the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
in support of LD 838, *An Act to Establish the Maine Clean Energy Authority***

January 20, 2026

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs and members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Phelps Turner, and I am a Senior Attorney and Director of Clean Grid at the Conservation Law Foundation (CLF). I appreciate this opportunity to testify in support of LD 838, *An Act to Establish the Maine Clean Energy Authority*, and the Concept Draft Amendment offered by Senator Lawrence in advance of today's hearing.

CLF, founded in 1966, is a public interest advocacy group that works to solve the environmental and energy challenges threatening the people, natural resources and communities in Maine and across New England. In Maine for almost four decades, CLF is a member-supported organization that works to ensure that laws and policies are developed, implemented and enforced that protect and restore our natural resources; are good for Maine's economy and environment; and equitably address the climate crisis.

LD 838 will enable Maine to develop clean energy in an affordable manner.

The creation of the Maine Clean Energy Authority (Authority) under LD 838 will include the establishment of a revolving loan fund that will be secured by issued revenue and municipal bonds. A recent study on transmission financing and development clearly indicates that relying solely on traditional investor-owned utility financing significantly burdens ratepayers. On the other hand, a case study from California demonstrated that alternative financing and development models, including public-private financing, could save customers in that state up to \$3 billion per year.¹ LD 838 will enable Maine to access similar savings through the Authority's financing and developing of clean energy infrastructure. Likewise, by enabling the solicitation of alternative transmission technologies and non-wires alternatives, LD 838 promotes the proven cost savings of those technologies and alternatives.

LD 838 can be strengthened by clarifying the Authority's scope.

As proposed in LD 838, the Authority will identify and establish transmission corridors in collaboration with other state entities, use competitive processes to fund and build infrastructure, and engage in various forms of transmission planning. LD 838 can be strengthened by clearly describing how the Authority will avoid any overlap with other state entities that are procuring clean energy infrastructure, and with transmission planning being conducted currently by transmission and distribution (T&D) utilities and ISO New England. Under LD 838, T&D

¹ Clean Air Task Force, "Wired for Savings," December 2, 2024, <https://www.catf.us/2024/12/analysis-public-private-financing-transmission-infrastructure-save-californians-3-billion/>.

utilities shall include their energy storage systems in their planning processes, and the Authority may fund T&D projects, including energy storage systems. These sections should be clarified to ensure alignment with electric utility restructuring.

We are all too familiar with the hurdles that large scale energy infrastructure projects have faced here in Maine over the past two decades. We believe that the creation of the Maine Clean Energy Authority would be a clear and significant step forward in building a more affordable, more reliable and more resilient clean energy generation and transmission infrastructure.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 838.