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Karen Blakelock, Policy Advisor
The Nature Conservancy in Maine
karen.blakelock@tnc.org



Joint Standing Committee on Taxation

RE: LD 2078—An Act to Establish the Electricity Cost Fairness Refundable Tax Credit

Senator Grohoski, Representative Sayre, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation my name is Karen Blakelock, and I work as the energy policy advisor for the Nature Conservancy in Maine. I appreciate this opportunity to comment in **support of LD 2078**.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that both nature and people can thrive. We work in more than 70 countries, and use a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners.

In November 2025, the Office of the Public Advocate released a statement that, in the face of rising and volatile energy costs, “affordability must remain at the center of every decision we make about Maine’s energy future.”¹ Polling that TNC conducted last February demonstrated that the vast majority of Mainers view the cost of living and the cost of electricity to be very serious problems. LD 2078 offers a step towards a solution. While we must rapidly transition to an economy powered by clean and renewable energy sources in an increasingly electrified society, it is imperative that we do so in a way that does not leave the most vulnerable members of our communities behind.

For example, while Maine has been a national leader in installing heat pumps and offering rebates for low- and moderate-income customers, unfortunate consequences arise when households are unable to afford their monthly electric bill and hesitate to use their source of electric heat for fear of rising costs. While the price of electricity in New England is largely set by fluctuations in natural gas prices, we do know that heat pumps can help save money over time, reduce health impacts by improving indoor air quality, and help efficiently heat or cool while reducing reliance on fossil fuels. As society at large becomes increasingly dependent on electricity, we must be working towards a future powered by clean and renewable energy that leaves no one behind.

LD 2078 is an innovative approach to solving a problem every state is grappling with. More than a quarter-way through the 21st century, electricity should be accessible to all Mainers, and TNC supports this committee considering ways to ensure that the most vulnerable members of our communities are not left behind.

¹ <https://www.maine.gov/meopa/about/news/public-advocate-responds-2026-standard-offer-supply-rate-increases>

I ask that you **vote Ought to Pass on LD 2078**. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments, I am happy to answer any questions now or in the future.