

February 26, 2026

William H. Schofield  
Van Buren Light and Power District  
General Manager

**THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS AND FINANCING AFFAIRS  
&  
THE JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY**

**“An Act Making Unified Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State Government, General Fund and Other Funds, and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027”**

**L.D. 2212**

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs (AFA) as well as members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology (EUT): My name is William H. Schofield, and I am the general manager at Van Buren Light and Power District. I submit this letter in support of the Department of Energy Resources’ biennial budget proposal to leverage significant federal funds to expand the critical work of the Maine Grid Resilience Grant Program.

Maine’s aging electric grid infrastructure faces significant pressure from severe storms. As a heavily forested, rural state, Maine’s electricity distribution lines have a high probability of damage from falling trees during wind or ice storms. As a result, Maine experiences more frequent and longer duration power outages than most other states. The 2023 and 2024 winter storms devastated communities across the state, including by inflicting significant damage to the electric grid and imposing significant new recovery costs for customers.

The Maine Department of Energy Resources’ Grid Resilience Grant Program has been critical for our community by helping to save ratepayer dollars and investing in crucial reliability and resilience projects across the state, which will help strengthen the state’s resilience and reduce costs over the long term.

Van Buren Light & Power District is a consumer-owned electric utility established in the early 1900s to provide locally governed, community-focused power service to the residents and businesses of Van Buren, Maine. As a municipal district, its organizational structure centers on a locally appointed board that oversees operations, budgeting, and long-term planning, ensuring decisions are made in the interest of the community rather than shareholders. The district’s service territory covers the full town boundaries of Van Buren (ZIP code 04785), where it delivers electricity to roughly 1,380 residential and commercial customers, making it a small but essential component of the town’s infrastructure and economic stability. Like many century-old consumer-owned utilities, the district faces growing challenges: aging poles, wires, and substations; increasing strain from severe weather; rising expectations for reliability; and the need to harden the grid against outages while preparing for future demands such as electrification, distributed energy resources, and

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modern metering. These pressures make grid resilience, infrastructure modernization, and sustainable investment central priorities to ensure the district can continue providing dependable, affordable power for the next generation.

Providing these additional funds to the Maine Grid Resilience Grant Program will enable more communities across the state to benefit from a more resilient and reliable electric grid while saving ratepayer funds over the long term.

We are anxious to receive these funds and be able to see Van Buren Light and Power District have the opportunity to remain a fixture in the community.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments in support of these important funds. If there are any questions, we would be happy to provide additional information.

Sincerely,



William H. Schofield

General Manager

Van Buren Light and Power District.

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Van Buren Light and Power District would like to thank you very much for the chance to praise a wonderful program and speak directly to the impact the funds make on our communities.