

Testimony of the Industrial Energy Consumer Group
In Support of
L.D. 952, *An Act to Create a 21st-Century Electric Grid, as amended*
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
April 13, 2023

Good afternoon, Senator Lawrence, Representative Ziegler and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology.

I am Tony Buxton, an attorney with the firm of Preti Flaherty, here today on behalf of the Industrial Energy Consumer Group (IECG). IECG has been representing medium and large sized consumers of energy in Maine for more than twenty-five years at the state, regional and federal level. We advocate for policies that reduce the cost of energy for our members and cost-effectively help Maine achieve its climate goals.

Industrial Energy Consumer Group testifies today in support of L.D. 952, *An Act to Create a 21st-Century Electric Grid*, as proposed to be amended by the sponsor's amendment. The issues to be addressed by the study proposed in that amendment are important ones for Maine, and ones which will help Maine prepare for the transition to the grid that we need to accomplish to our climate goals in the most cost-effective way possible. These issues are numerous enough that, even if they are managed superbly, will still strain our collective resources. If we fail to plan and execute at a high level, we will waste vitally needed funds, and even more vitally needed time, that will be difficult if not impossible to replace.

IECG does have some suggestions for the Committee to consider as it works on this legislation. We are concerned that both the time for the study and funds proposed are inadequate to the task. This undertaking seems to rival the electricity restructuring effort which took more than two years to accomplish. We would suggest at least a three-year effort, if not more. Perhaps the Committee should fund and direct that a work plan be developed between the cooperating agencies and with public input. This work plan could be shared with the Committee next session, which might confirm the time and funds required to properly undertake the assigned tasks. We would hope that the State could leverage recent and ongoing PUC proceedings in this effort. Finally, the Committee should also give itself the authority to propose additional funding or allow more time if needed next year.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments. IECG is prepared to work with the sponsor, this Committee, and all parties to address the issues presented by LD 952. IECG is happy to answer questions now or at the work session.