

131st Legislature
Senate of
Maine
Senate District 24

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Testimony of Senator Eloise Vitelli presenting
LD 1830, An Act to Advance Maine's Clean Energy Goals
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology
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Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and esteemed members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology, my name is Eloise Vitelli, and I proudly represent Senate District 24, which includes all of Sagadahoc County and the Town of Dresden in Lincoln County. I stand before you to introduce LD 1830, "An Act to Advance Maine's Clean Energy Goals." This proposal is a tried and true approach to securing more cost-effective clean energy to benefit all Maine consumers.

This bill builds on the important progress we've made in the last several years in growing Maine's renewable energy sources. My bill LD 1494 from the 129th Legislature set in statute the requirement that 80% of Maine's electricity come from renewable resources by 2030, with a goal of 100% by 2050. As highlighted by the Renewable Energy Goals Market Assessment, additional clean energy sources are required to meet these goals. Maine can achieve this, but we must set clear standards for the future of Maine's energy infrastructure.

When I first introduced LD 1494, Gov. Mills had just formed the Climate Council. Now we have strong direction from the Maine Won't Wait report. We have a strong Governor's Energy Office. We have more information than ever before about the threats posed by climate change, and the actions we must take to reduce or mitigate those threats. Diversifying and expanding our renewable energy sources is critical to protecting our economy, environment, and public health from the devastating effects of climate change.

This bill has three intersecting goals: to advance our clean energy development; to ensure benefits to ratepayers; and to make use of contaminated lands.

This bill requires the Governor's Energy Office, in consultation with the Public Utilities Commission, to review the impacts of the State's renewable resources portfolio requirements and submit a report to this Committee by March of next year and every 5 years thereafter. This encourages us to keep our promise to Maine people as we work toward energy independence, keeping all stakeholders who contribute to energy solutions accountable.

The bill establishes competitive solicitation for energy or renewable energy credits equal to 5% of the retail electricity sales in this State for the period from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021 plus any amount contracted under previous procurements that is not brought into commercial viability within a reasonable time frame established by the commission. This builds in another mechanism for accountability.

This bill directs the commission to select only projects the commission finds will benefit ratepayers. Bid prices must be less than the then-current standard-offer service rate, ensuring Mainers energy costs will diminish. This builds upon the standards for procurement established in previous sessions and is designed to get us to our clean energy goals, step by step.

My bill also takes into consideration Maine's issue with contaminated lands as the legislature works on solutions for Maine farmers. Eligible projects that are located on land that is contaminated can be preferred when all else is equal. My bill directs the commission to apply a weight of 70% to the benefits to ratepayers and a weight of 30% to the economic use of contaminated land. I will note, if this Committee prefers a bonus or bonus points for siting a project on contaminated lands, I would welcome that in order to simplify and streamline the process. My main goal is to encourage renewable projects where they make the most sense to our grid and energy future.

Thank you for your time and your attention to this matter. I will answer any questions you may have.



Eloise Vitelli

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Sagadahoc County and Dresden