



**Testimony of Competitive Energy Services  
In Support of LD 1850, “An Act Relating to Energy Storage and the State’s Energy Goals”**

**Before the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology  
16 May 2023**

Good afternoon. My name is Eben Perkins, and I am pleased to be here today speaking on behalf of Competitive Energy Services. CES sees great promise in energy storage technology and supports the deployment of storage in Maine when it can meet grid reliability needs in a cost-effective manner.

LD 1850 proposes that the Public Utilities Commission conduct one or more proceedings to determine the conditions under which an investor-owned transmission and distribution utility may own, have a financial interest in or otherwise control an energy storage system. CES has concerns with this proposed approach for addressing utility ownership of energy storage. We recommend the Committee carefully review Central Maine Power Company’s two recent attempts to develop utility-owned battery storage in its service territory, which had major flaws and showed a utility’s ability to use its monopoly power to unfairly give preferential treatment to utility-owned assets.

One of the key tenants of the Electric Restructuring Act was to ensure that Maine’s investor-owned utilities cannot use their control of the grid to 1) unfairly prevent others from accessing and utilizing the grid and 2) give preferential treatment to utility-owned generation assets. Through the interconnection study process, a utility’s study assumptions and methodology have major implications for the timeline and cost of new generation and energy storage resources to be able to interconnect to the grid. Third-party owned energy storage projects can be easily undermined and potentially killed during the interconnection process depending on how a project is studied by the utility.

In CMP’s ongoing rate case, the Company proposed two utility-owned, front-of-the-meter battery storage projects that would interconnect to CMP’s distribution system. During questioning, CMP admitted that the Company planned to study the interconnection of these two projects differently than similar battery storage projects on its system owned by third parties. This preferential treatment is like Delta Airlines being handed the keys to air traffic control at the Portland Jetport and giving Delta planes special access to the runway at the expense of other airlines.

The current statute and process for the Public Utilities Commission to review utility-owned energy storage proposals is working. Like the two utility-owned battery projects proposed in the rate case, CMP’s proposal in 2021 to install and own a behind-the-meter battery system at Casco Bay Lines’ ferry terminal in Portland was scrutinized and received substantial pushback from various stakeholders. If the Legislature believes clarification is needed on utility ownership of energy storage, CES recommends a clear prohibition on Maine’s investor-owned utilities owning and financing energy storage systems. Maine is well on its way to meeting its energy storage deployment targets without utility-owned storage. The energy storage market is still nascent, opening the door for utility ownership through the proposed proceeding will send a chilling signal to the market and would ignore clear, troubling evidence from CMP’s two recent proposals for developing utility-owned storage.