



Perennial Renewables Testimony on LD 2163
February 6th, 2024

Members of the Committee,

My name is Nick Lacasse, I'm one of the owners of Perennial Renewables. Perennial develops and installs solar projects in central Maine, we consult for large renewable generators looking to sell load into Maine's nodal system, and we're proudly located right on Water Street in Hallowell.

Perennial testifies 'Ought to Pass' for LD 2163, as we appreciate the intent of the bill.

However, before sending this bill forward to the Legislature, Perennial urges the EUT to increase the protections currently contemplated.

Before boomerang-ing back to Maine to start Perennial, I began my career in the competitive electricity and natural gas industry. From Houston to New York, I was very lucky to have been exposed in the way I was to the competitive energy industry. I learned a lot.

I also learned things I wish I had not, about the way bad actors in the industry operate.

Given 3-minutes this afternoon, I do not have the time to use specific examples, but I make myself and my company's assets available to any concerned party.

On LD2163:

- Point 1: Enrollment and unenrollment deadlines: extremely necessary. This is a well thought out inclusion to this bill.
- Point 2: "Express Consent"
 - A. This is currently limited within the bill to residential electricity users. We would suggest making this applicable for all ratepayers. Everyone is targeted by bad actors in the competitive space.
 - B. The "express consent" only gets at contract renewal; it is Perennial's opinion that the bill would not stop high Month-to-Month "post contract term" fees charged by bad actors, as suppliers consider this part of the original contract term. Charging a high post contract term fee is a 'go-to' for bad actors and is one of their most predatory practices. We need to limit post contract term rates, which is possible from a regulatory standpoint, to increase the benefits of LD2163.

- Point 3: We need to digitize the competitive supply piece of the transaction. Central Maine Power has a well functioning online bill management system called MyAccount. CMP has done a great job building MyAccount. But why can we not log into CMP MyAccount and see our electricity supplier in a digital and dynamic way? Currently this is managed statically – only when a bill is produced on your meter read date, which comes once a month, is this information available. This isn't a knock-on CMP by any means, for we know of no utilities that have digitized this portion of the bill. However, being able to manage your energy supply contract and enrollment digitally would reduce ratepayer confusion and will lead to less fraud. This would be no different than logging into your Spectrum account and changing your membership. Yet, we have to wait for a CMP bill every month to see if there were any changes to our energy supply charges, changes which we currently rely on the word of competitive providers to manage. We need to bring energy supply management into the 2020s, it's currently in 2002.

I feel it is my civic duty as a Mainer involved in the energy industry to help root out the fraud that is currently occurring. I do not use the term fraud lightly.

Perennial has additional ideas to continue to reform our competitive markets to make them well functioning and beneficial to all ratepayers –continued reformed is needed. But Representative Ziegler is about to hit his gavel.

The protections currently contemplated in LD LD2163 are well thought out, and drive at the heart of many issues. However, there is more that we can do.

Thank you,

Nick Lacasse
Perennial Renewables