VERSANT POWER

Testimony in Support of LD 2163
An Act to Require Electricity Providers to Inform Customers of Alternative Electric Rates
and Gather Consent Prior to Contract Renewal
February 6, 2024

Senator Lawrence, Representative Zeigler, and distinguished members of the committee, my name is James Cote and I am here on behalf of Versant Power in support of LD 2163.

We wish to thank Senator Grohoski for sponsoring this legislation and appreciate the opportunity to have collaborated with the Public Advocate. Versant Power views this bill as an important step towards ensuring that low-income customers of competitive electricity providers do not pay more than the standard offer rate.

During the the period 8/21-7/23, Versant Power enrolled (which could also be a re-enrollment) 3,580 residential customers on rates higher than standard offer. Of that, 357, or approximately 10%, were low-income customers, some paying almost $0.15 kwh more than standard offer.

This bill is a good first step towards protecting our most vulnerable customers. In our role, Versant Power would be responsible for two provisions in this bill:

Section 1, 9. Requires a transmission and distribution utility to process electronic enrollments or unenrollments of customers within 3 business days.

Section 8, 19. Would require a transmission and distribution utility to send competitive electricity providers a list of all of its customers that are enrolled in or are known to be pursuing low-income financial assistance programs.

Versant Power feels comfortable that it could manage these requirements from an administrative perspective. We would respectfully suggest, however, that the scope and confidentiality of customer information that is directed to be shared is carefully contemplated by the committee in consultation with the Public Utilities Commission and Office of the Public Advocate as we want to avoid any unintended consequences of this information-sharing.

Thank you for your consideration, and we would be pleased to bring additional information to the work session at your request.