

Testimony of Ashley Luszczki  
Before the Joint Standing Committees on Appropriations and Financial Affairs  
and Energy, Utilities and Technology

In Opposition to Part LL of  
L.D. 210, An Act Making Unified Appropriations and Allocations for the Expenditures of State  
Government, General Fund and Other Funds, and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law  
Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30,  
2025, June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027

February 27, 2025

Senators Rotundo and Lawrence, Representatives Gattine and Sachs, and members of the Appropriations and Financial Affairs and Energy, Utilities and Technology Committees, my name is Ashley Luszczki. I am here on behalf of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, Maine's largest business association, representing large and small businesses.

The Maine State Chamber supports the broader effort in Part LL of the Biennial Budget to establish a Department of Energy Resources. Predictability in energy policy and project planning is critical for businesses looking to grow, invest, and create jobs in Maine. We appreciate Governor Mills recognizing the importance of energy and proposing a dedicated department focused on energy planning, independent of shifting political priorities, is a positive step toward providing stability businesses need.

At the same time, Part LL would also grant the new Department the authority to conduct competitive solicitations for meeting electric demand and reliability needs and meeting RPS obligations. Procurements are an essential way to drive renewable investment and we do recommend that there be additional attention on this section. As Maine looks to diversify its energy portfolio and make large-scale procurements, it must do so in a way that is data-driven and cost-effective for ratepayers.

If the Legislature decides to move forward with the establishment of a Department of Energy Resources, we would recommend that this section be provided additional attention, potentially included in other vehicles, and that we ensure that there is a clear standard of review with this new authority.