

March 4, 2025

Karen Blakelock, Policy Advisor
The Nature Conservancy in Maine
Karen.blakelock@tnc.org



Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology

LD 444—An Act to Lower Energy Costs by Repealing the Law Setting Out the State's Goals for Consumption of Electricity from Renewable Resources.

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Karen Blakelock, and I am the climate and energy policy advisor for The Nature Conservancy in Maine. **I appreciate this opportunity to testify in strong opposition to LD 444.**

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that both nature and people can thrive. We use a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners. The Nature Conservancy has been leading conservation in Maine for more than 60 years and is the 12th largest landowner in the state, owning and managing roughly 300,000 acres.

TNC Maine recently completed a bipartisan poll of voters in Maine where 71% of respondents identified the cost of electricity as a major concern. At the same time, the poll showed overwhelming support for clean energy targets. Mainers understand that we can harness clean, renewable energy while protecting what makes Maine unique, creating jobs, keeping energy dollars in our state, and diversifying our energy portfolio.

Electricity costs in Maine have been volatile in recent years due to the fluctuations in the prices of natural gas. About half of the electricity in New England is generated using natural gas, and the cost of this finite resource is the primary driver of the market price of electricity in New England. In contrast, Maine's investment in renewable energy has helped stabilize electricity prices while reducing emissions by allowing people across the state to power their homes and businesses with Maine-made energy from our sunshine and our wind.¹

According to a 2024 report, our state renewable resource goals— investments in wind, solar, biomass, and hydro have saved Maine ratepayers more than \$21 million per year by suppressing prices in the regional electricity market by outcompeting more expensive resources like fossil fuels.²

¹ <https://www.maine.gov/energy/electricity-prices>

² <https://www.maine.gov/energy/sites/maine.gov.energy/files/inline-files/Maine-RPS-Impacts-and-Procurement-Policy-Options-Report-Master-FINAL.pdf>

Science shows that for the future of our communities, our economy, and the natural environment, we must rapidly move towards a low-carbon future powered with well-sited renewable sources of energy. Repealing Maine's renewable energy goals would not lower energy costs— it would have the opposite impact by increasing our dependence on fossil fuels and driving up electricity costs. It would hurt Maine people, Maine businesses, and our natural environment.

I urge you to vote Ought Not to Pass on LD 444. Thank you for the opportunity to comment, I am happy to answer any additional questions now or in the future.