

Marshall Cohen
22 Hancock St
A-307
Portland, ME 04101

**Testimony to the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and
Technology. March 13, 2025, Augusta, Maine**

Senator Lawrence, Rep. Sachs, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of LDs 342, 343 and 601.

My name is Marshall Cohen and I live in Portland, Maine.

I speak in support of all 3 bills, but more importantly I would like to speak to the opportunity these pieces of legislation present for Maine to consider a process to look at 21st century options for nuclear electricity.

Briefly, my background includes work as a legislative representative for Central Maine Power and the Maine Yankee Atomic plant from 1984-1988, Vice Presentative of Government Affairs for Urenco and the National Nuclear Enrichment Facility built in New Mexico from 2003-2007, Senior Director for State and Local Government Affairs for the Nuclear Energy Institute in Washington, DC from 2007-2012, and Vice president of Government Affairs for the Babcock and Wilcox Company from 2012–2015, when that company split up. During that time I was Chairman of the newly formed Virginia Nuclear Energy Consortium Authority and from 2015-2018 I was the part-time Executive Director of the independent, state established, Virginia Nuclear Energy Consortium itself. Then I retired.

I am not a nuclear physicist or engineer.

But I do know that states all across the country are exploring today how to benefit from the new 21st century nuclear technologies, such as small modular reactors, enhanced safety protocols, the toughest industrial regulatory scheme in the world through the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the values of carbon-free energy production that comes with nuclear electric, and the enormous education, workforce and economic benefits that this technology brings to communities.

Ohio, Kentucky, Michigan, New Hampshire, Tennessee and Texas have established task forces or commissions that bring together various stakeholders, including government officials, academia, industry and others, to explore policy options to maintain existing nuclear facilities and look at advanced reactor technologies.

Minnesota and Michigan have included nuclear in their clean energy standards. Utah and Idaho define nuclear as a clean generation source.

The Virginia Legislature created a nuclear energy consortium to bring together all interested parties: universities, companies, utilities, government energy officials, to explore what opportunities there were. This was in 2013, I was part of that. Today Virginia has opened a nuclear energy research hub, with grants and support, that is exploring what their next steps could be for generation capacity, including small reactors. Several new nuclear technologies are now based in Virginia. Virginia declared nuclear a clean energy source. The Virginia universities, including Rep. Paul's alma mater, Liberty University, are extensively involved, in all of that. The public has a role. As do suppliers, utilities, local communities and the state Government.

Maine has a good history with nuclear energy. For many years the Maine Yankee plant safely produced reliable, steady, low cost electricity for Maine people. 3 times in the 1980s the people of Maine defeated attempts by public referendum to shut down the plant. They knew and respected its value.

It's a long process, with many stakeholders, many issues. But such a process done openly and transparently can produce public support, identify research and workforce opportunities, look at the new technologies, fit what would be best for Maine into its planning. My recommendation today is to use these bills to develop that kind of process.

Thank you again for allowing me to speak, I am happy to answer any questions I can.

Marshall Cohen
mclobby@me.com
703-825-1506

3/13/2025