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*Testimony of Representative Gerry Runte introducing  
LD 1270, An Act to Establish the Department of Energy Resources  
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology*

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and distinguished Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on the Governor's bill, **LD 1270, An Act to Establish the Department of Energy Resources**. I am pleased to strongly support this legislation and urge the committee to vote Ought to Pass.

This bill mirrors language in the Governor's budget proposal and establishes a cabinet-level Department of Energy Resources by transferring and enhancing the responsibilities currently held by the Governor's Energy Office into this new department.

For the last six years, the state has embarked on significant initiatives to pursue its energy, climate, and economic development goals. Since most of these initiatives originated from different legislative actions, each has been pursued separately and assigned to various state agencies. At present, our energy policy is the sum of all of these programs, coordinated through a mix of formal and informal relationships, and operated from the unique perspective of each agency.

Virtually all aspects of energy policy are deeply interconnected – pursuing them in isolation puts successful execution at risk.

Given the recent publication of the State Energy Plan providing context for how new initiatives are pursued, as well as this legislative proposal, we have the opportunity to properly organize and manage how the state develops and implements its energy policy over the long term by creating a durable, cabinet-level organization responsible for coordinating that policy – one that has comprehensive oversight of its various components. The bill:

- Creates a new Department of Energy Resources, designated as the State's official energy office, led by a commissioner appointed by the Governor and subject to legislative confirmation;

- Centralizes energy planning and oversight, empowering the Department to coordinate policy across state agencies, advise the Governor and Legislature, and produce a biennial State Energy Plan aligned with Maine's climate and economic goals;
- Empowers the Department to lead competitive clean energy procurements starting in 2026, guided by the State Energy Plan, to ensure adequate energy supply while controlling energy costs and building Maine's energy economy;
- Coordinates closely with Efficiency Maine Trust and Maine Housing to ensure integrated energy policy and maximize benefits for low-income Mainers; and
- Codifies workforce and economic development programming by establishing in statute a clean energy jobs and innovation initiative in collaboration with Maine's training and education institutions.

By strengthening and elevating energy leadership within state government, this bill provides the foundation the state needs to secure federal funds, streamline coordination, and lead Maine into a resilient and affordable energy future. This foundation will also allow the Department to identify further efficiencies to enhance its operations and outcomes for Maine people.

Thank you for your time and attention. Members of the Governor's Energy Office are here to discuss the bill's details further and answer your questions.