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PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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**Testimony of the Maine Public Utilities Commission
Neither For Nor Against**

**LD 1048, An Act to Require Certain Notice Requirements for Whistleblower
Protections**

April 24, 2025

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology (Committee), my name is Deirdre Schneider, testifying neither for nor against LD 1048, An Act to Require Certain Notice Requirements for Whistleblower Protections on behalf of the Public Utilities Commission (Commission).

LD 1048 requires public utilities, competitive electricity providers and utility contractors to provide annual written notice to each employee advising the employee of the rights, protection and remedies guaranteed under 35-A M.R.S. § 1316. It also includes specific requirements for the notice. Section 1316 allows employees and utility contractors, in their personal capacity, to testify before or provide information to a legislative committee, the Commission or the Public Advocate on their own time without repercussions from their employer when that employee is acting in good faith.

35-A M.R.S. §1316(10) currently requires a public utility and a competitive electricity provider to notify the public utility's and the competitive electricity provider's employees, affiliated interests and utility contractors of their rights under that section of law. This notice requirement conflicts with what is being proposed in LD 1048, but both are concerning notice for the same section of law. Additionally, under current law, utility contractors are the protected entity, and the law does not apply directly to the employees of a utility contractor or place any responsibility upon the contractor. The Commission suggests, if the Committee moves forward with this bill, that the existing law be amended to include the notice requirement contained in LD 1048 instead of creating a new section of law and to address the treatment of utility contractors so that the law treats utility contractors consistently. This would remove any ambiguity and avoid creating any conflicts in law.

I would be happy to answer any questions or provide additional information for the work session.