Testimony of Lee Drouin
In Support of
LD 1792, *An Act Regarding Energy Policy of the State*
Before the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
May 15, 2025

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology; I am Lee Drouin, I am president of United Steelworkers Local 449, representing the 473 unionized workers at the Huhtamaki facility located in Waterville. I am here today to provide testimony in support of LD 1792, *"An Act Regarding Energy Policy of the State."* We are proud of the recycled products that we make at our plant. We have worked hard through the years to maintain production in the face of global competition while working to innovate new and improved products. But now, we need your help to maintain our jobs in Waterville.

At Waterville, we are one of the largest electric consuming-only facilities in Maine. Unlike other facilities, we do not have the ability to host our own generation behind the meter. This means that we are completely exposed to the impacts of energy policy decisions. To us, the proposed bill buys time for Maine to determine how to pay for today's Net Energy Billing (NEB) costs without needlessly risking significant business impacts and possible job losses. Doing this now, will allow Maine time to figure out how to reform NEB to limit its costs going forward. As you know, it isn't healthy for businesses to fear big increases in every stranded cost case.

The Waterville Huhtamaki facility is one of over ~~30~~ 18 Huhtamaki plants in North America. As a company, we compete against other well-known names in the industry. As a facility, we are competing internally. The current stranded cost burden puts our local jobs at risk in favor of facilities in states that have a significantly lower energy costs.

We ask that you approve LD 1792. While we could argue that it still places too much of the NEB costs on the Waterville plant, we think it could give us the time we need to find a more permanent solution.