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Testimony of Ashley Luszczki

Before the Joint Standing Committees on Energy, Utilities and Technology
In Support of L.D. 1223, An Act to Lower Electric Rates for Maine Ratepayers by Requiring the
Payment of Certain Costs from the General Fund

October 30, 2025

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Ashley Luszczki, and I am here on behalf of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, representing a network of more than 5,000 businesses. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of L.D. 1223, *An Act to Lower Electric Rates for Maine Ratepayers by Requiring the Payment of Certain Costs from the General Fund*.

Over the past several years, through legislation, Maine has taken significant steps to shape our energy future and achieve significant statewide policy goals that will transform our energy landscape. Immediate steps in implementation of these policies have required transmission and distribution utilities to procure specific types of renewable generation, implement and administer programs like net energy billing, and make infrastructure upgrades — not just for grid reliability, but to achieve policy goals.

L.D. 1223 raises an important question: how should state-directed energy goals be funded? The Chamber's response is simple — if a utility is directed by the state to achieve something for a broad societal benefit, the costs should come from the state's General Fund, not on the back of electricity rates. Right now, residents, businesses, and institutions are largely funding these mandates through their electricity bills. This is effectively a hidden, regressive tax that falls hardest on those least able to absorb it and on businesses that have competitors in states without these policy charges.

The Chamber's purpose is to advocate for and promote a positive business climate so that Maine's smallest to largest businesses can grow here, and we can expand the state's economy. Yet with Maine's electric rates among the highest nationally, it makes it harder for businesses — from manufacturers to hospitals to small eateries — to stay competitive or grow here.

Shifting these legislatively mandated costs to the General Fund would better align policy intent with funding mechanisms. As these directives are for societal benefit, their costs should be transparent, evaluated alongside other public priorities such as education and infrastructure, and spread equitably across all taxpayers. The state's goals to

reduce emissions and expand renewable generation ultimately benefit all Mainers, and funding them through the General Fund will improve economic competitiveness and rate transparency.

Maine can continue to pursue decarbonization, innovation, and reliability, but it should be done in a way that is equitable, transparent, and economically sustainable. For these reasons, the Chamber supports the goal of L.D. 1223 and asks for your support.