

To: Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
From: Jackson Chadwick, Maine Youth for Climate Justice
Date: Tuesday, January 20, 2026



RE: Testimony in Support of L.D. 838: "An Act to Establish the Maine Clean Energy Authority"

Dear Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology,

Good afternoon. My name is Jackson Chadwick, and I represent Maine Youth for Climate Justice (MYCJ) as their Advocacy & Organizing Director. MYCJ empowers youth under 30 to champion climate action and justice through legislative advocacy, community organizing, and educational initiatives. Our members include high school and college students, as well as young adults entering and supporting Maine's diverse workforce.

I am testifying today in support of L.D. 838: An Act to Establish the Maine Clean Energy Authority.

Young Mainers care about the future of our electric infrastructure, and we view this legislation as a long-term way to help ensure a more reliable electric transmission system, one that prioritizes safety, lowers long-term costs for ratepayers, and creates more good-paying jobs for young people.

Many young Mainers working in the trades are a part of apprenticeship programs, which often offer a more accessible and affordable pathway to developing their skills and entering the workforce. As written, L.D. 838 incorporates labor standards into the Authority's work from its inception, including language that ensures young apprentices are employed in the construction of such transmission systems and are paid the prevailing wage. If Maine is to retain and attract more young people, we must create pathways that allow them to live, work, and prosper here. This legislation offers one way to advance that goal that is close to home for many young people.

There is also national precedent for establishing such an authority. Rural states with populations similar to ours, including Idaho, Nebraska, New Mexico, and North Dakota, have similar statewide energy authorities tasked with developing and financing transmission infrastructure.

For Maine, this is an opportunity to move at the pace the climate crisis demands. We risk missing our greenhouse gas reduction targets—not for lack of technology, but for lack of coordination, by failing to establish this authority. Young Mainers that MYCJ represents will also lose out on opportunities to find long-lasting, good-paying jobs in a tough job market. We should be doing all we can to help young Mainers succeed, and L.D. 838 provides one possible pathway to do that.

Therefore, we ask you to support L.D. 838 to strengthen the future of our electric transmission infrastructure and expand opportunities for youth workforce development.

Respectfully submitted,

Jackson Chadwick
Advocacy & Organizing Director
Maine Youth for Climate Justice
jackson@mycj.org