

**Testimony of Ashley Luszczki
Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology
L.D. 838, An Act to Establish the Maine Clean Energy Authority
January 20, 2026**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Ashley Luszczki, and I am here on behalf of the Maine State Chamber of Commerce, the state's largest business association. While the Chamber supports more generation and a stronger transmission and distribution system, we oppose L.D. 383, *An Act to Establish a Clean Energy Authority*.

There is no shortage of interest in developing generation, transmission, and distribution infrastructure in Maine today. Our members are actively investing, proposing projects, and participating in regional planning processes through ISO-New England, the Public Utilities Commission, and the Department of Energy Resources. Creating a new authority to plan, finance, and direct projects suggests this work isn't already being done, when in fact it is.

We believe this bill is duplicative and raises more questions than answers. It establishes a new entity with significant decision-making authority, yet its responsibilities overlap with those of existing agencies. The legislation provides little clarity as to when project decisions would be with the Authority versus the Commission or DOER, or how conflicts between entities would be resolved.

The bill also introduces significant procurement and financing concerns. The Authority would conduct competitive solicitations, finance projects through an open-ended bonding authority, and prohibit utilities from owning projects it develops. This structure could disrupt existing utility planning and cost-recovery frameworks. While the bill suggests public financing could lower costs, it would expose ratepayers to long-term debt obligations without clear guardrails and create financial uncertainty for decisions that are typically grounded in demonstrated system need and cost-effectiveness.

Members of the Chamber's construction industry have also raised concerns about the mandatory labor standards established in the bill. Requiring project labor agreements for larger projects would significantly limit the pool of eligible contractors, making it more likely that these projects would be built by out-of-state firms. That outcome would increase project costs while undermining opportunities for Maine-based companies and workers.

Higher and less predictable energy costs that could result from this legislation would directly affect Maine's economic competitiveness. For manufacturers, large employers, and energy-

intensive businesses, electricity costs play a critical role in decisions about expansion and investment. By adding cost pressures, regulatory uncertainty, and financing risk, L.D. 838 could work against the very economic and climate goals it seeks to advance.

For these reasons, the Chamber opposes L.D. 838 and urges the Committee to focus instead on strengthening existing planning and regulatory processes, encouraging private investment, and advancing clean energy infrastructure in a way that is market-driven, cost-effective, and inclusive of Maine employers and employees.