

*Peter Whitney*

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and distinguished members of the Energy, Utilities, and Technology Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on LD 2112, An Act to Authorize Municipalities to Form Community Choice Aggregation Programs to Procure Electricity.

I am here today in support of this bill.

My company, Bold Coast Energy, was founded in 2008 and has worked closely with businesses across the state to optimize and reduce electricity costs through the third-party supplier marketplace. Having been born and raised in Maine—and now raising my own family here—I've had the privilege of partnering with some of the hardest-working businesses in the state over the past 18 years.

While my work in energy consulting has focused primarily on medium- and large-scale commercial customers, I am frequently asked by residential and small commercial customers about alternatives to default service electricity rates. Unfortunately, at this time, I don't have a strong answer for them.

The current third-party supplier marketplace is complex and difficult to navigate for consumers who are not well-versed in energy supply contracting. As a result, meaningful, affordable, and transparent choice is effectively out of reach for many Mainers.

While there are various versions of community choice aggregation programs across the country, LD 2112 is designed to integrate seamlessly with the state's existing third-party supplier framework and the purchase-of-receivables program currently allowed for standard offer providers. To the extent others follow me to the podium with concerns about potential implementation costs at the utility billing system level, we are committed to working together with the utilities to address those concerns. Time and time again when CCAs have been authorized in other states, I understand those concerns have been addressed reasonably and fairly.

One aspect of electricity pricing that is often overlooked is the importance of market timing. With Maine and the rest of New England experiencing some of the highest pricing volatility in the country, it is critical to be prepared to act when favorable market conditions arise. Consumers – and with the passage of this bill, communities - who are informed and ready can often benefit from short-notice buying opportunities, as many of the State's medium and large energy consumers do today.

I strongly believe that LD 2112 will create optionality where little exists today, while doing so within a framework of robust consumer protections that are currently lacking in the residential third-party supplier market. This bill represents a thoughtful step toward expanding access, improving transparency and optionality, and protecting consumers.