



Testimony in Opposition to LD 2113

**An Act to Align Long-range Grid Strategy with the State Energy Plan and
Strengthen Integrated Grid Planning**

January 22, 2026

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the committee, my name is James Cote and I am here on behalf of Versant Power to testify in respectful opposition to LD 2113.

First, we would like to extend our appreciation to the sponsor for his continued focus on several important energy priorities, including long-term planning, grid modernization, affordability, and policy alignment.

Our opposition to this proposed legislation stems not from any disagreement about the importance of these issues, but from concerns over how the implementation of this bill may conflict with or be duplicative of other ongoing efforts at the MPUC, DOER, OPA, Efficiency Maine Trust and the utilities themselves.

We highlight three specific items for your consideration:

- 1) At the direction of the legislature, and guided by the MPUC, Maine's utilities have recently filed their first Integrated Grid Plans, which are now available for public comment. These initial plans are the result of a years-long process that included unprecedented stakeholder and public engagement and detailed forecasting, modeling and analysis aligned with current industry best practices. The IGPs provide an answer to how Maine's grid can cost-effectively facilitate accomplishment of the state's climate and energy goals while maintaining or improving reliability and resilience, protecting affordability, and satisfying other important policy objectives including customer empowerment and transparency.

After reviewing the plans and considering public feedback, the Commission is authorized to accept, reject or order changes be made to the IGPs to address any deficiencies.



In addition to evaluating the filed IGPs, this process is designed to solicit concepts and proposals – from utilities, stakeholders and the public – about how future iterations of the grid plans can be enhanced or improved.

Should the Legislature wish to incorporate additional requirements or considerations into future grid plans, e.g. around one or more of the goals specified in LD 2113, we believe this existing process provides an appropriate pathway which would leverage new utility capabilities and expertise, include ongoing opportunities for stakeholder engagement, and limit additional administrative cost.

2) Several of the objectives of LD 2113 are the subject of ongoing work by various entities in Maine, including:

- The Public Utilities Commission currently has open dockets concerning performance-based ratemaking, multi-year rate plans, Non-Wires Alternatives, the interconnection of distributed energy resources, and regularly evaluates the reliability performance of Maine's utilities.
- The Department of Energy Resources is required to regularly update and file the state's Energy Plan and has produced analysis, e.g. the Pathways to 2040 report, concerning implementation of Maine's energy goals.
- The Public Advocate oversees the evaluation of Non-Wires Alternatives for qualified utility proposals and rigorously evaluates utility spending in rate case filings, storm accounting order proceedings, and other relevant dockets.
- The Efficiency Maine Trust, as outlined in its most recent Triennial Plan, is focused on developing demand management strategies capable of customer savings, meeting future grid needs, and/or deferring traditional utility capital investments.

Taken together, these efforts, among others, address a significant portion of the objectives identified in LD 2113.



To the extent the Committee believes additional coordination or analysis is required, Versant suggests directing an appropriate entity (e.g. the Department of Energy Resources) to analyze existing processes and reporting its findings or recommendations to the next Legislature. Such an approach would also allow time for the first iteration of the IGP process to reach completion, including consideration of any recommendations that may be made therein.

- 3) Regarding the scope of the Long-range grid plan, as defined in Sec. 4, Part 1, Subsection C of the bill, Versant believes the utilities themselves must play a key role in planning their systems to meet dynamic and rapidly evolving future grid needs while continuing to accomplish the core responsibility of providing safe and reliable service at just and reasonable rates.

Versant consistently evaluates new technologies and industry practices, including via the engagement of expert consultants, in an effort to continuously improve its operations. The Company welcomes feedback from outside experts and stakeholders – e.g. during the five technically focused milestone meetings it hosted throughout the IGP planning process – and has integrated this feedback into its planning efforts. Versant also understands the key role it plays in facilitating state policy and works to efficiently and effectively implement statutory and regulatory directives.

However, as the operators of the grid for which we are ultimately responsible, technical experts within the utility itself must be primarily responsible for planning the system, subject to regulatory oversight. The appropriateness of this approach was recognized in the IGP process, which gave utilities responsibility for producing grid plans while requiring the solicitation and consideration of feedback from stakeholders, experts and the public.

Lastly, we would note that while Versant Power is an investor-owned utility, our staff is relatively small. We take planning and policy directives seriously, and as such, devote significant professional staff time to them, including and especially in producing the Company's first IGP. New processes and directives would need to be staffed, resourced and prioritized alongside the other important work for which our team is accountable, including our core responsibility of providing safe and reliable service, system enhancements necessary to meet future needs, and the facilitation of other state policy goals.



Thank you for your consideration and we would be pleased to answer questions or provide additional information at the work session upon your request.