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PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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Testimony of the Maine Public Utilities Commission

Neither For Nor Against

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 Distinguished Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology (Committee), my name is Deirdre Schneider, testifying neither for nor against LD 2113, An Act to Align Long-range Grid Strategy with the State Energy Plan and Strengthen Integrated Grid Planning on behalf of the Public Utilities Commission (Commission).

While the Commission appreciates the spirit of LD 2113 and agrees that better coordination of efforts could lead to better outcomes, we are concerned with how LD 2113 aims to enhance grid planning efforts. Additionally, there are many activities that are currently underway and until those activities are completed, it is difficult to determine the most appropriate pathway forward to achieve the overall intent of LD 2113.

Background

The two investor-owned transmission and distribution utilities recently filed their first integrated grid plans (IGPs) required by law. Comments on those plans are due on March 15, 2026.¹ Following review of comments received, along with the Commission's own review of the IGPs, the Commission will determine if there are any deficiencies that need to be addressed by the utilities. This is the first time this process has been undertaken, and the Commission plans to evaluate how this first-time process went in order to improve the next IGP process, which will begin on or before November 1, 2027.

Following the dismissal of CMP's rate case, the Commission initiated an inquiry in order to receive input and develop Commission guidance with respect to the Commission's preferred approach to multi-year rate plans, including expectations for performance metrics.² At the conclusion of this process, the Commission intends to provide guidance that the two investor-owned utilities may use in developing proposed multi-year rate plans that include performance metrics. The goals are to streamline distribution rate cases and establish rate plans that support affordability, ensure reliable service and promote appropriate investments in the distribution grid. The Commission has engaged the same consultant that produced the "Performance-Based Regulation Report With Recommendations" report³ submitted to the Committee in June 2025 to assist in this process. The Commission anticipates deliberations on this process at the end of February.

¹ Docket 2022-00322

² Docket No. 2025-00354

³ <https://www.maine.gov/mpuc/sites/maine.gov.mpuc/files/inline-files/Maine%20PBR%20Report%202025-06-26.pdf>

LD 2113

LD 2113 requires the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) to develop a long-range grid plan and requires the Commission to adopt and implement the plan developed by DOER. It further requires subsequent rate cases, capital investment plans, and integrated grid plans to demonstrate consistency with the long-range grid plan. It does not require any evaluation of that long-range grid plan by the Commission. This may be problematic as it requires an independent quasi-judicial entity to implement a plan developed by an executive branch agency without any determination that it is within the public interest and/or can be accomplished cost effectively.

LD 2113 also requires the Commission to establish performance-based regulatory mechanisms to align incentives with the long-range grid plan. As stated above, the Commission is currently engaged in developing performance metrics to achieve desired outcomes. To some extent this is duplicative of work currently underway.

The Commission looks forward to continuing discussions on LD 2113 with the sponsor and other stakeholders and thinks the overall goals of this bill have merit for further exploration. It may make sense to enable us to work through current proceedings and assess effectiveness before adding additional layers. For example, if the current proceeding to provide guidance for multi-year rate plans is successful, we could develop a process to more routinely provide such guidance to inform rate case filings.

I would be happy to answer any questions or provide additional information for the work session.