



**Testimony of the Efficiency Maine Trust
Ian G. Burnes, Director for Strategic Initiatives**

IN SUPPORT OF

**The Sponsor's Amendment to LD 2140 –
Resolve, to Pilot a Behavioral Demand Response Program
to Lower Electric Bills and Improve Grid Reliability**

Presented to the Joint Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Technology

February 19, 2026

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and Members of the Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology, my name is Ian Burnes, and I am the Director of Strategic Initiatives at the Trust. My responsibilities include overseeing the Trust's Innovation Program, where we conduct pilot projects to test the cost-effectiveness of various products and procedures to determine if, and how, they should be incorporated into the Trust's core program offerings.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify today on behalf of the Efficiency Maine Trust (the Trust) in support of the Sponsor's Amendment to LD 2140 - Resolve, to Pilot a Behavioral Demand Response Program to Lower Electric Bills and Improve Grid Reliability.

This bill directs the Trust to establish a pilot program that will encourage residential consumers to modify their consumption of electricity during periods of "peak demand" in order to lower electricity bills and improve grid reliability. This type of program is called "Behavioral Demand Response." It stands in contrast to the Trust's most common interventions, which focus more on assisting consumers to purchase a particular type of device. This aspect of the program – focusing on behavior more than equipment – makes it accessible to all consumers regardless of their income level, the type of home or devices they possess, and whether they are owners or renters.

In the past several years, the Trust has been expanding its offerings in the area called "Demand Management." The Trust is now operating under Triennial Plan VI, approved last year by the Board of Trustees and subsequently by the Maine PUC. Under this Plan, the Trust's Demand Management Program is currently offering four initiatives that showed the highest potential, per customer, for cost savings and improved grid reliability. The four initiatives now underway are:

1. The Demand Response Initiative for Commercial and Industrial Customers (www.energymaine.com/demand-response/);
2. the Large Battery Initiative (www.energymaine.com/energy-storage-system-

- projects/);
- 3. the Small Battery Initiative (www.energymaine.com/small-battery-incentives/); and
- 4. the Off-peak EV Charger Initiative (www.energymaine.com/off-peak-charger-incentives/).

A Behavioral Demand Response program is a type of demand management initiative that the Trust has been considering but is not currently offering. This type of program has lower potential for savings per individual customer than the four initiatives currently being offered, but when a large volume of customers are aggregated together it can potentially deliver significant savings and grid benefits. The bill contemplates that the Trust would work with one or more subsets of residential customers to share information about the benefits of shifting their consumption to off-peak periods and about how to maximize those benefits. In a typical Behavioral Demand Response program, this information-sharing includes general educational materials about:

- what could be driving consumers’ demand during peak periods,
- tips on how to shift it to off-peak periods, and
- encouragement to enroll in time-of-use (TOU) rates.

Once consumers have been introduced to the ways in which they can manage their consumption during peak periods, the Trust will explore different ways to help the participants maximize their savings. This may include updates on how much they have been consuming and ways they could save more. At the end of the pilot the Trust will analyze the performance and share the results directly with the participating consumers and with the utilities, the PUC, the Office of Public Advocate and the Department of Energy Resources and this Committee.

Usually, the Trust pilots a new product or process before incorporating it into a full-scale program to establish that the new product or process performs well and that it is cost-effective, i.e., it saves more money than it costs. It also seeks to gain a better understanding of how the product or process is being assimilated into the supply chain, and how to best design a program and market the product or process to end users.

The Trust is prepared to undertake such a pilot for Behavioral Demand Response. It would require several months to prepare a more detailed plan and collaborate with the utilities and other stakeholders to recruit a group of consumers to participate. Once consumers have voluntarily enrolled in the pilot, it will take additional time to deliver educational materials to prepare them for taking action during peak periods. The Trust would seek to test consumer responses to peak periods during both the winter season and the summer season, which could not realistically be complete before the autumn of 2027. For this reason, we believe a report-back data of February, 2028 is realistic and reasonable.

I would be happy to answer any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/IGB

Ian G. Burnes
 Director of Strategic Initiatives