



STATE OF MAINE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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Testimony of the Maine Public Utilities Commission

Neither For Nor Against

LD 2140, Resolve, to Pilot a Behavioral Demand Response Program to Lower Electric Bills and Improve Grid Reliability

February 19, 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 the sponsor's amendment to LD 2140, on behalf of the Public Utilities Commission (Commission).

The Commission is very supportive of efforts to improve demand response and flexibility. These types of tools have the potential to provide long-term savings to ratepayers and immediate relief to participants.

Currently, the Commission has several dockets open that look to encourage changes in usage to reduce peak demand and seek proposals that offer innovative approaches to deploy technology quickly to avoid expensive investments in the system, increase resilience and reliability, and provide savings for ratepayers. There is broad authority to accomplish a lot under current law that could be implemented by a number of entities in the State (EMT, DOER, utilities, etc.).¹

In the Commission initiated investigation of time-of-use rates,² the Commission is exploring the implementation of time-of-use rates for delivery and supply for residential and small business customers. This investigation was recently expanded to consider critical peak pricing, peak time rebates and EV-Only Charging Incentives. In its Order expanding this investigation, the Commission noted it would also consider other rate designs proposed by the parties that would provide savings for customers.

In Docket Nos. 2024-00191 and 2025-00343, the Commission is exploring the use of Regulatory Sandboxes, which provide a structured environment for testing new technologies and business approaches under modified/more flexible regulatory rules to increase the speed of adoption. Specifically, the Commission issued a Request for Information³ seeking information and comment on a variety of issues related to potential project proposals to improve resilience in the nearer term and address escalating storm costs. The Commission expressed interest "in exploring more ways to use innovative technologies, potential third-party partnerships with utilities to address specific resilience

¹ Including 35-A M.R.S. §§ 103-A, 104 and 3143

² Docket No. 2025-00176

³ 2025-00343

issues, potential use of utility-owned or operated energy storage where the competitive market alone will not provide the service and utility ownership or control could benefit ratepayers, or other innovative approaches that to date may not have been pursued due to certain barriers that limit their adoption.” As noted in the RFI, the Commission has broad authority in this area.

The Commission looks forward to continued engagement on ways to improve demand flexibility to enable us to get more out of the current distribution system and avoid costly upgrades.

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