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Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs

RE: LD 2212 An Act Making Supplemental Appropriations and Allocations from the General Fund and Other Funds for the Expenditures of State Government and Changing Certain Provisions of the Law Necessary to the Proper Operations of State Government for the Fiscal Years Ending June 30, 2026 and June 30, 2027

Senator Rotundo, Representative Gattine, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Appropriations and Financial Affairs, Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utility and Technology, my name is name is Max Rush, I represent The Nature Conservancy in Maine and I'm here providing testimony on their behalf **in support of the supplemental budget proposal for the Department of Energy Resources.**

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is a nonprofit conservation organization dedicated to conserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Guided by science, we create innovative, on-the-ground solutions to our world's toughest challenges so that both nature and people can thrive. We work in more than 70 countries, and use a collaborative approach that engages local communities, governments, the private sector, and other partners.

Specifically, TNC is supportive of:

- **Grid Resilience Grant Funding**

The \$3 million requested in the budget will be used to serve as the required match for the federal Grid Resilience Formula Grant Program, which will allow the state to leverage an additional \$4.4 million in federal funds. It is important that Maine take advantage of this opportunity to ensure that this federal funding is not reallocated to other states, and because Maine's aging electric grid infrastructure combined with the privilege of living in a heavily forested state, means that we experience an abnormally high number of electric blackouts. Polling that TNC conducted in early 2025 showed that the majority of Mainers viewed the cost of living and the cost of electricity to be serious concerns. In a time of rising electric rates and in a state with a high energy burden, the Maine Grid Resilience Grant Program saves ratepayers money while investing in critical reliability and resilience projects across the state.

- **Account transfers and durable staff capacity**

Additionally, we understand that the budget proposes transfers that are required as a result of the transition from the Governor's Energy Office (GEO) to the Department of

Energy Resources (DOER), and that will continue and make permanent one position. We are supportive of this proposal as The Nature Conservancy understands how impactful the expertise of GEO, and now DOER, is for statewide energy policy, planning, and development.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in support of supplemental budget items related to the Department of Energy Resources. I am happy to answer any questions now or in the future.